

# Comparative Philosophy

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*TO MY MASTER*

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*A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE*





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## INTRODUCTION

M. Masson-Oursel has undoubtedly succeeded in writing a book that cannot fail to excite interest, to attract attention, and to provoke discussion, if not challenge.

Ostensibly and purposively designed for the advancement of philosophy to the high level of positivity, this study of Comparative, or Compared, Philosophy nevertheless appears to present us with a method of investigation, a mode of thought, that may well become useful, if not indispensable, to those who would pursue Science. That is, to those who would pursue that Science which, in the words of Harvey, is a habit in respect of things to be known. The form of knowledge and thought which merely enables us to do things we have not hitherto done, such as the listening to a broadcast message, or the administering of poison gas, does not necessarily imply the scientific habit of mind.

But, if Science is, properly speaking, a habit of mind in respect of things to be known, that is not to say that there is no place for modification of any habit, for change in any method, that has long been adopted. Mr. Bertrand Russell says, truly enough, that geometry has lately become non-Euclidean; and logic, non-Aristotelian. Certainly, scientific method, as Rignano and Vaihinger, amongst others, have clearly shown, will not always be Baconian, or even Galilean. Perhaps it never was; at any rate to the extent that we have always declared it to have been.

The professed psychologists, logicians, metaphysicians, and philosophers *proprement dits*, will have much to say concerning the degree of success that has attended, or may attend, the use of M. Masson-Oursel's method in the exploration of those fields wherein have chiefly lain his own interests: something may here be said concerning this method itself: its applicability to certain disciplines and sciences not now usually reckoned part of philosophy; and, also, concerning the attitude of mind involved in and by its attempted application.

How far philosophy, as conceived by the Author, may become positive if this method be followed, this habit of mind adopted: how far the attempt to raise philosophy to the positive level does not in itself contain the kind of *petitio principii* that the Author too justly finds lurking in most scientific and philosophical propositions: how far in the attempt itself may not be hidden, as an Irishman might say, an endeavour to smuggle the thin end of the absolute wedge by a side wind: how far may be rewarded the attempt to attain knowledge of Mind and Thought by an examination, from which all introspection is excluded, of the products of Mind and Thought: all these are questions of ulterior, if not of ultimate, importance. But no effort need here be made to answer them.

M. Masson-Oursel's method is one which may be said, without any desire to play upon words, to be designed to attain the positive by way of the comparative, for he would secure objectivity by the due appreciation of relativity. He tacitly admits that both science and philosophy are concerned, in every case, with what is a function of two

variables : and so he is more concerned to establish some kind of a positive ratio between the two variables than, following a will-o'-the-wisp, to give a positive value to one variable in terms of an assumed positive value of another. And he seeks to establish this ratio between two variables by the use of a kind of analogy that he calls comparative, and which he declares has for us a positive value.

Now, although it is by the use of this method that M. Masson-Oursel hopes that a positive philosophy may be reached : since he at least suggests that in part this method has been developed from the method of science : and since it would seem that this method may be of great utility in science itself : we may fairly discuss his proposals without prejudice to any views we may indulge as to the success likely to be encountered by it in its application to exploration of the domains of psychology, logic, metaphysics, and theology.

We must, however, in the first place be sure as to the method that is actually adopted in the natural sciences, in distinction from that which we are accustomed to say is generally practised.

In presidential addresses and the like, it is usually said that, ever since the time of Bacon or of Galileo, we have been accustomed to proceed from observation, by induction, to the discovery of truth in the form of generalizations or laws.

We maintain strenuously that we arrive at these laws, or generalizations, from the study of "facts" or objective presentations, without any recourse to the question-begging or arbitrarily assumed premises which, so we say, constituted

the *points de départ* of all predecessors of Galileo and Bacon ; save perhaps of Roger Bacon, who is generally conceded to have had some glimmerings of the true light vouchsafed him. Doubtless M. Masson-Oursel is right when he says that philosophy will be on firmer ground than at present, when and if we do proceed as it is said that men of science proceed ; but we should at least inquire as to the measure in which Science does follow the path that her devotees insist is hers, and hers only.

In practice, unless continually upon our guard, we do not always proceed in scientific investigation from immediate experiences to right conclusions. It were, indeed, no true economy did we always insist upon beginning at the beginning. Had Darwin waited to establish the proof of the question begged by the whole of his work—the question whether homologies do indicate descent—we should never have had the book which, entitled *The Origin of Species*, assumes the real nature of species, and declares that species had a natural origin : two premises that are as *a priori* as anything in St. Thomas Aquinas.

So, though in Science we do generally proceed by way of induction (though not without the accessory use of experiment, hypothesis, and deduction, as well as of other implements), yet do we commonly proceed from data, which themselves are in no sense objective presentations : which, for the most part, are interpretative references of a very high order of complexity, if not of improbability ; and which are in any case coloured, to an extent that we are unwilling to admit, by our particular views or attitude in respect of metaphysical, logical, and philosophical,

if not theological problems. If indeed M. Masson-Oursel succeeds in putting philosophy on a positive basis, or level, Science will be compelled to rebuild her very foundations, or at least to underpin her superstructure. But the mischief is that to-day, in Science, while ever commencing our further interpretations at higher and higher levels, we still cry the more loudly that we are basing our mental operations upon "facts". We cry thus because we feel that, since *ex hypothesi* the proper method is to proceed from facts to generalizations and laws, and since *ex hypothesi* we do pursue the proper method, clearly our starting points are "facts", and not assumptions!

In this way is set up in each generation a new scholasticism, without the logic of the old: a new academic, without the metaphysic of the old: a new intellectual tyranny, without the philosophy of the old. It was in like fashion that what we call the old scholasticism, the old academics, the old tyranny, came to exist, and to pass. We forget that the quarrel of the Church with Galileo was not that the Church feared the light, feared the destructive effect of truth on dogma. No: the Church quarrelled with Galileo because he wished to establish a new dogma, the dogma of the absolute truth of scientific *ficta*.

Had Galileo been content to employ the saving words of Occam or of Vaihinger, and to say that appearances and experimental results were "as if" what he postulated were true, the whole course of modern thought might have been otherwise than what it has been. Not Science, but Scholastic Realism, was arraigned by the Church, and,

until recently, Scientific Realism has held sway and exercised unconscious, if not unchallenged empire, to the greater detriment of philosophy. So it is not without justice that Mr. Bernard Shaw, in the *Forum*, of October, 1924, is enabled to twit the vanity of modern men who, calling themselves Baconians, either cook facts to suit theories, or theories to suit facts. They perform the latter feat by way of first of all insisting that their "theories", or interpretations, or conventions, *are* facts. It is certainly so in what is called Scientific Medicine. Now, though M. Masson-Oursel points, and with some reason, to the great advances made by certain sciences, such as anatomy, biology, and philology, since they first allowed a comparative method, the reasonable doubt whether these sciences really deserve therefore to be called positive may be countered by the query whether they may not become positive when, first, philosophy itself has become positive, and secondly, when the natural and other sciences—embedded, as it were in the *matrix* of philosophy—themselves adopt the method which Masson-Oursel claims is alone capable of establishing philosophy on the level of positivity.

Broadly speaking, this method is one which, always comparative, adopts, for the special purpose for which it is designed, the data of history as well as those of immediate experience. Comparisons are made in temporal as well as in spatial or geographical alignment. This, of course, in Science, is not an altogether unknown proceeding. Both anthropology and palæontology, for example, often make use of what are, in effect, historical documents. Yet, too often



palæontology is divorced from comparative zoology, and the study of fossil man from man extant. If it were not so, both disciplines would have avoided disastrous and uneconomical error. But, and this is of great importance, Masson-Oursel, in the domain of philosophy, insists that we should always consider the "fact" in relation to its "milieu" or context, and that comparisons be made, not between isolated facts, but between one and another fact; each fact being considered only in relation to its context. "The comparability of two facts is a function of the comparability of their contexts." If only such comparisons as these are engaged, fructuous analogies result, which may be spoken of as proportions and not as ratios. Ratios are, in themselves, meaningless: a proportion is a positive statement of immense practical value. Only when in comparison or analogy four factors are involved, do we draw near to positivity. \*

Now this method of comparison, whereof the adoption does seem to relieve us of the scandalous necessity of "cooking facts to suit theories, and theories to suit facts" (as well as of pretending that we are measuring something by an objective standard when we are stating in terms of our own personal co-efficient) is one that, although nowhere generally acknowledged and formally stated, has yet been utilized, empirically at least, by certain workers in certain departments of science

By others it has been avoided, as unconsciously as definitely, just as by the man-in-the-street: who compares what is unfamiliar only with what is familiar: who unconsciously holds that what is familiar is what should

be : to whom what is unfamiliar offends by what, in ultimate analysis, is but unfamiliarity ; and who never stops to consider whether what is familiar has any claim to acceptance other than familiarity. Those who think and act thus are only imitating, on a humbler level, those " methods of Science " by whose means we take theory for fact when used as premise. Such methods have been skilfully rebuked by Mr. E. S. Russell, in his *Study of Living Things*, wherein he, always studying the creature in strict relation with its milieu, approaches very nearly to Masson-Oursel's method, and, in consequence, attains a notion of the continuity of the animate and inanimate world denied to those who regard the universe as, biologically, made up of isolated creatures warring either with each other or with an opposed environment. It is not perhaps going too far to say that a careful institution of the method of positive analogy would lead, in biology, if not to a reconciliation, at any rate to a suspension of hostilities between transformists and non-transformists, between Darwinians and Lamarckians.

Again, in anatomy a confused and confusing composite " type ", derived from the promiscuous dissection of " Europeans " *as such*, has become set up as the familiar standard for Man. Since more or less casual dissections of Black and of Yellow Men have not, as a rule, revealed anything not *sometimes* met with in Europe, it has become customary to declare that the anatomical differences between White, Yellow, and Black Man are inconsiderable and not of " specific " importance. Since the ape most resemblant to the composite " European " type is the chimpanzee, it has become customary to declare that Man

is probably descended from a chimpanzoid ape. The question of the evidential value of homologies, in point of descent, has been, as always, insouciantly begged.

Yet, M. Masson-Oursel's method having been adopted, more or less empirically, by several observers, some interesting analogies have been propounded. It has been shown, as the result of work by Kurz, by Sera, and by Klaatsch, that, if the brains and femora of Negroes and of Yellow Man be compared with those of Gorillas and of Orangs, two distinct "types" emerge (each of which is occasionally represented amongst "Europeans") together with a third, or "White", type, which may be placed in relation with the Chimpanzee. Sera, almost anticipating Masson-Oursel's formula, says that the femur of the Orang (or Asiatic ape) is to the femur of the Japanese as is the femur of the Gorilla (or great African ape) to the femur of certain African men. A vast flood of light is thus thrown upon many vexed questions: the *petitiones principii* involved in the construction of theories of descent upon the assumed evidential value of homologies, and of ethnological theories upon the assumed existence of a pure "White" population of Europe, are at once avoided. We can say, with Arldt, that the differences between one great ape and another are more marked than are those between each one of the three great apes and the human race it most resembles.

Now, when we realize that there are "typical" differences between the brain of a Negro and that of a Chinaman, as there are between that of a gorilla and that of an orang-utan, by what right do we assume that a Negro and a

Chinaman "see", or react to the same environment, in the same way, as does each other?

By what right do we assume that either a Negro or a Chinaman sees and reacts, to the same environment, as do we? Or, even, that if "fully-developed" they would, or should do so?

M. Masson-Oursel, speaking as a psychologist, pertinently inquires whether we are, indeed, justified in assuming that Fechner's law is generally applicable to humanity. The results of anthropological inquiry, made after his model, increase the force of his demand. But, when we find that the brain and mind of some child in this country are analogous to the brain and mind of a Chinaman and an orang alike, we come nearer to a better and more sympathetic understanding of humanity, even though here in our western and "civilized" milieu we confine the orang in the Zoo, and the "Mongolian imbecile" in an asylum.<sup>1</sup>

Further illustration may be derived from a department of mental activity that is, or should be, at once scientific and philosophical. It has been the custom, during many years, for historians of Medicine to trace in approved fashion the development of Medicine, as a Science, from Grecian, Cretan, or possibly Egyptian origins, through Roman and Alexandrian channels, with a by-pass to Arabian fields of barren culture, and so on again by way of the Renaissance to modern times. Finally, the coloured lime-lights of publicity and adulation are concentrated upon the ornamental fount of all true knowledge, personified, in the centre of the stage, yesterday by the bacteriologist,

<sup>1</sup> *The Mongol in our Midst* (Kegan Paul, 1924).

to-day by the bio-chemist, and to-morrow—who knows?—by the psycho-analyst.

This historical tracing of development in a purely temporal alignment avoids any but the most perfunctory allusion to Hindu or Chinese medicine, while even less notice is taken of the medical science of “uncivilized” races: and always is carefully maintained the strategic position of our own undoubted superiority, here and now!

We may, as Masson-Oursel says, be justly proud of our connexion with the era and the people that have developed science in the manner in which it has been developed. But we need not therefore ignore the science of other times, places, and peoples. The late Dr. Rivers, when writing the lectures afterwards published in his *Magic, Medicine, and Religion*, was impelled to declare that the systems of therapeutics and of diagnosis adopted by certain “savage” peoples are no less coherent and logical than are our own supposed to be, and that, like their systems, their practice flows naturally from what must be called the philosophical and metaphysical beliefs held by them concerning the nature and causation of disease. Of course Medicine, as a Science, as an organized body of beliefs and interpretations derived from experience, everywhere reflects, and has always reflected, not positive truth, but the mentality, the metaphysics, the philosophy, and the religion—or its lack—of those who have professed it. And while the Art of Medicine—the habit, not in respect of things to be known, but in respect of things to be done—is, in every milieu, partly derived from experiences common to all mankind and partly from special, local, and temporal experiences,

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at the same time it is and has always been dependent upon the forms of Science most congruent to the divers places and sundry times, and the psychical no less than the physical environments, in which it has been practised for the explanations and justifications required in support of it by those who think. A positive Science of Medicine must be then, at the least, both oecumenical and secular in purview.

It is therefore that historian of Medicine who has most command of the method of positive analogy who will be least likely to fall into the vulgar and learned error of contemptuously denying, relatively to its milieu, the practical value of any method of treatment that is founded upon a subjectively absurd philosophy: merely because its *rationale* is incomprehensible or ridiculous to us, here and now.

The real point—always begged—is this: Are, or were, the measures under discussion, efficacious under the circumstances in which they are or were employed? This question is a touchstone of wide applicability.

Again, the positive analogical comparison seems destined to be fruitful in Epidemiology—a special branch of Medicine that requires full advantage of the historical method. Hitherto an essentially fallacious method of historical comparison, founded upon a very unconvincing metaphysical realism, has been almost exclusively employed. Otiose disputes have been conducted as to whether or no, for example, the Sweating Sicknesses of the fifteenth and sixteenth century were “the same diseases” as this, that, or the other recorded epidemic. As well might we inquire,

in all seriousness, whether or no the French Revolution was "the same" as the Russian: or the war of 1870-1 "the same" as the war of 1914-18. But, if we consider, *in relation to their place and time*, the clinical phenomena we call Sweating Sicknesses, and then consider the clinical phenomena of our recent Influenzas, *in relation to their place and time*, we obtain illumination that makes the dark paths clear. We at once see how it is that when a French peasant, attacked as we say by Influenza, goes to bed under conditions that are, in effect, mediæval, his illness takes a form that is not familiar to those who have not read the accounts written in 1528-9; we understand at once why it is that his neighbours, faithful to tradition, persist in declaring the malady to be *la suette*!

Perhaps the amazingly practical value of "proportional analogy" is best realized when it is employed in the case of one of the many crucial and yet simple problems that still sway and distract opinion in every field of research.

Certain ethnologists, having regard, as is proper, not merely to data occurring in series of time, but to those in geographical extension, have found likenesses between certain Egyptian, and certain Central American cultures. But, while some have maintained the independent origins of these like cultures, others have as strenuously defended the hypothesis of a single origin, a common source. So long as the similarities and dissimilarities were being noted, useful work was being done, and the statement, made many years ago by Latham, that some of the former inhabitants of Central America were "the Egyptians of the New World" was a contracted statement strictly

comparable in form to that of Masson-Oursel that Socrates was to Greek Sophism as Confucius to Chinese Sophism. But, to the mind of a "positive analogist", the value of the observational work done has been completely obscured by the assertion that the observed similarities *prove* a common origin. Such "proof" depends necessarily upon the assumption that such similarities do always "prove" a common origin! If, however, we rigorously compare only the data, *in their milieux*, we better realize the essential continuity in diversity of the world as a whole, as well as the continuity with the whole of the parts under discussion. And we avoid wasteful controversy.

It must, however, be admitted that, great as may be the value to Science of the comparative method that M. Masson-Oursel advocates for Philosophy, it may not, for the moment, appear to forward the accomplishment of what is too often thought to be one, if not the principal function of Science: namely, the achievement of generalizations, of universals, of laws, and of theories which (in Medicine at any rate) are often accepted, in a realist sense, as statements of absolute truth, if not as active forces and "real" existences.

In the ordinary way we are concerned with several kinds of generalization, or general statements. In making use of the simplest, we seek to express, in a collective way, what we think we have found to be true in particular instances. We find that men die, and we say that All Men are Mortal. Sometimes we achieve the same end, not by speaking collectively—on the whole a safe method of expression—but by making use of universals. And we say that Man is Mortal. This way may lie error—the error



of the realists. Very often the summation of experience in one or other of these forms passes as a definition, but then it must be as one of those definitions which, in Poincaré's words, *doivent être regardées comme non-predicatives et sont celles qui contiennent un cercle vicieux*. They are often called inductions yet, obviously, they teach us nothing we do not already know, or think we know—because they are non-predicative. On the other hand, when, in resuming experiences, we do make an induction, or a predicative definition, we are not confining ourselves to what we "know", but are passing into the realm of the unverified, if not the unverifiable. Nevertheless, such are useful forms of statement so long as they are taken in the sense and for the purpose proposed for them. Their value depends upon their context or milieu. And so, even before complete verification, they may be, and often are made use of in the construction of further inductions and predicative definitions that lift the original particulars to a still higher level of interpretation, bring them into yet another context, and so afford fresh material for mental "experiment" in Rignano's sense, further progress towards synthesis.

The method of statement adopted by Masson-Oursel appears to be one that, without leading us falsely to think we have arrived at any "true" induction, at any "discovery" of this or that, does at any rate afford us material for interpretations on a high level and by a new or at least hitherto unacknowledged route. It is a method that must not be thought to demand release from the necessity of justification by every means—observation, hypothesis, deduction, experiment—hitherto required in

Science, but it is also one that, by reason of its absolute subordination to objectivity, cannot fail to stimulate observation and the co-ordination of observations, and so, like the purely scientific work of certain chemists, to give us a thousand brilliant "bye-products" that, otherwise, might be wasted

But there is a theoretical justification, as well as one practical, for its exercise. If on the one hand we gain skill in a convenient and irrefutable method of statement that has all the merits of elasticity and of adaptation to discussion and examination in the light of new evidence, and that at the same time provokes exploration in fresh fields, on the other we are insensibly led away from the acceptance of hypothesis and theory as constituting positive truth, even when apparently verified by experiment.

Even when scientific theory and hypothesis is apparently verifiable by observation and experiment, cool examination often forces us to declare that we are not, for the moment, justified in saying more than that the "facts" are AS IF our theory or hypothesis were true. The "facts" of experience are as often compatible with the falsity as with the truth, of the theories and hypotheses by the aid of which we have increased the range of our experiences or "discovered" fresh facts, and which, by their results, have been supposed to prove their own truth. At most the new facts demonstrate the *convenience* of the theory or hypothesis that has led to their discovery, or that, *post hoc*, is formulated. But the practical value, in the work-a-day world, of the new "facts" is another matter. In Medicine, certainly, some of the most useful remedies

and practices have been "discovered" as a result of totally illogical processes of thought applied to the examination of quite inaccurate "facts": that is, as the results of processes to our minds illogical, and of facts inaccurate, according to our own experience, whoever we may be.

And if after all we are driven to say and hold that the Objective is appreciated under different aspects by different races and by different men at different times and in different environments: that the Objective is as differently interpreted in as many different ways as there are differences of exact physical and psychical constitution and of environment: is that not as if to say that only by appreciation of the utter relativity of all human thought can we form even an image of the Real?

If the postivity attained in philosophy—and in all that the word implies as used by M. Masson-Oursel—is itself only a shadow, is itself only a fiction, is it not at any rate more useful, and so more nearly truthful, than any other shadow, any other fiction, that any one of us may independently set up? It is only by the constant and cumulative comparison of each "fact", each datum, simple or complex, each in its own context, with others in their contexts, that we can build up any picture that is truly comprehensive of the whole fact and context with which we are concerned. Though even from the summit of the highest mountain we may not see all the kingdoms of the earth at one time, we can so at any rate better appreciate all the hills and the valleys than if we insist on regarding the master peak from our own chosen station in the plains.

The most important scientific question of to-day is one

that is philosophical: namely, the validity of Science itself as a means of interpreting experience and of acquiring knowledge in respect of what we call the world about us. Perhaps we may ultimately come to think the function of Science, in respect of what is about and around us, and all there is to be known about it, to be, not an absolute standard test or measure, but as it were a Vernier scale: of no value, in itself, as a measure, though useful when applied to what we deem, for our purposes, an absolute scale. Science, like the Vernier, and like any other "fact", has a value that depends upon the context in which it is applied.

Masson-Oursel well says that "Si la science ne doit jamais exprimer adéquatement la vie, ce n'est pas à dire que la science ne fournisse pas la plus sûre manière de se renseigner sur cette création que nous appelons la vie". Nevertheless, we cannot hope to understand life unless we study, in all their aspects and presentations, human thought and the products of human thought—topics on which biology, the so-called science of life, has nothing to say.

And it does seem as though it were only by attempting the habit of comparing each fact in its context, with others in their contexts, that we can escape setting our feet upon the slippery slope that leads us, first to think all men see as we do, then to declare that all should see as we do, and finally, that only we see things as they are—if not, indeed, that only in our own seeing is there reality and truth.

F. G. CROOKSHANK.

*October, 1925.*

## COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

### PRELIMINARY

The desire to enlarge, nay, rather, to determine what is known by inquiry into the thoughts of other civilizations, is one that has been keenly felt in divers environments. Inclinations insufficiently satisfied by home-planned exercises have sought compensation in the doctrines of the stranger. Greek mysticism thus showed zest for initiation into the Egyptian and Asiatic cults; the signature of "Mysteries" under which the revelations present indicates the imperfect adjustment to ideas fostered in a different cultural centre. Thus too, mediaeval China welcomed eagerly the Indian Buddhism that, among new ideals and with a monastic system, brought her new prescriptions for the contenting of old instincts.

Opinions have been felt to be confirmed when their like have been discovered to be shared by others. Thus came it, for example, that the Fathers of the Church stressed with evident partiality so much of Christianity as had been anticipated by Jews, Greeks, Egyptians, and Persians.

Syncretism has been formally instituted by certain centres of speculative thought, placed, so to speak, at the junction of different traditions. Under the *Pax Romana* that so nearly succeeded in unifying the world, gods the most disparate made mutual accommodation in one and the same Pantheon, whilst West and East commingled at

Alexandria, that crossways of many cultures. Hence the composite nature of certain minds: such as that of Philo, in whom Israel and Hellas so closely associated: and of certain forms of thought, such as the Gnosis and the Cabbala, wherein manifold influences converge.

Conversely, polemical expedients for use against national traditions have sometimes been derived from some acquaintance with the foreigner. Thus, Voltaire's liking for China is the outcome of the same spirit as is the Anglo-mania of not a few Frenchmen of his time. Our fellow-citizens, being shown that in other latitudes there has been wisdom not inferior to that of our own homelands, so learn that "a man may be a Persian" and yet "a man for a' that". A handy weapon, this, primed and loaded for ready use at all times against a prevailing form of religion!

Finally, we must reckon with an itch for what is exotic. This is so with the Romantics, bitten by local colour and, like Delacroix, nostalgic for warmer lights, for skies yet more dazzling: it is so with the Descriptives, in whom the artistic impulsion towards the picturesque blends with a very modern zeal for uncompromising positivity.

These vagrant quests for new paths have never ended save in blind alleys or deserted lanes. The desire to know more has been vitiated from the very first, by the use to which it has prematurely been demanded that the knowledge should be put. The disinterestedness of true science has lacked patience also, and method no less. Above all, save in exceptional instances, there has been default of the methods of inquisition. The scrupulous objectivity of the Buddhist translators: the impartial vision that we admire in al Birunî,

in Hsüan-tsang and in I-tsing were of the rarest provenance. The preparation of a Sanskrit translation of the *Tao-teh-king* was an unique event. Though the "perennis philosophia" was extolled unceasingly, yet hardly any attempt was made to realize it by way of diligent inquiry into what Diogenes Laertius called the "philosophy of the barbarians". An expression this that merited fortune, for it restored to humanity, as forming part of philosophy, that discipline so fascinating to Greek vision, the Thought of other peoples.

Theodoret seems to have been a voice crying in the wilderness when he uttered the aphorism :

*Δείξαι ἐκ συγκρίσεως τὸ διάφορον.*

*Ἐκ παραλλήλου θεώμενος τὸ διάφορον.*

This aphorism, consistently with its complement *ἐκ παραλλήλου θεώμενος τὸ ὁμοῖον*, may be said fitly to inspire a plan which we hold to be the one thing needful for the advancement of philosophy to positivity.





## PART I

### CHAPTER I

#### OF POSITIVITY IN PHILOSOPHY

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been no lack of effort to construct philosophy, in the fashion of the various sciences, on a positive foundation. The founder of positivism desired to settle the character and limits of the *Positive Philosophy* as co-extensive with the expanse of the domain grasped by the positive mind. Thus conceived, philosophy, once more in harmony with a tradition that deploys from Greek antiquity to Cartesianism, again becomes synonymous with science. But this acceptance of the term philosophy has not secured unanimous assent. We persist in considering certain disciplines, such as logic, ethics, æsthetics, and jurisprudence, to be constituent parts of philosophy, although their partly normative character precludes all possibility of their institution as sciences in the proper sense of the word. Moreover, we continue to regard metaphysics as eminently philosophical: and metaphysics is as unscientific as any perquisition can well be, since it deals with the absolute, instead of being concerned with relations. It should be our business to draw nigh to philosophy, by positive means of approach, throughout the whole extension thereof, including those parts and

aspects that do not yet, and perhaps never will, comply with the exactions of science.

All attempts to assimilate philosophy with science, or to treat of philosophy in accordance with the principles of any one science—be it physics, biology, or sociology, are compromised by the same *ignoratio elenchi*.

On the other hand, the risk of committing this sophism is averted if the term philosophy is frankly employed, in all its methodological ambiguity, as connoting such sciences as psychology, such demi-sciences or arts as logic and ethics, such ideal improvisations as metaphysics, but in all its objective exactitude, as implying the whole of the disciplines relative to the spiritual life.

Now, there is one indirect route by which the manifestations as well as the aspirations of the spirit may be attained in a manner that is at least positive, though, in default of determinable laws, not really scientific. This route is that of historical investigation. Thanks to the effort of criticism in restoration of the past, history, at once the theatre and the residuum of human activities, constitutes a datum that theoretically is as susceptible of disinterested and impartial examination as is physical experience. Since historical facts are never subject to repetition, it perhaps follows that they are not admissible of laws, but it by no means follows that they are without a certain necessity, by whose virtue such and such antecedents explain such and such consequents. This objectivity, this necessity, point out a positivity, that is to say a stable and solid base, one and the same for all minds bent on the experiment that we call examination of the past. If the phenomena of spirituality

indeed lend themselves to investigation through the medium of this experiment, our knowledge of them, at any rate in principle, will have little right to be envious of the certitude of natural knowledge.

The basic principle of any positive philosophy must be then that of resolute intention to take the facts of philosophy from history and from history alone. When the philosopher—instead of creating or imagining his object of study—instead of attempting rectification without preliminary exploration and circumscription—shall limit his ambitions to the systematic examination of the feelings and thoughts of humanity graven in history, then will spiritual analysis achieve such decisive progress as did material science when first the investigator constrained himself to learn all from physical experience.

We are well aware that this modesty of aim, this discipline in research, are but little natural to us. Thought has a thousand ways of self-illusion concerning such knowledge of the real as it may acquire; that which it deems to have attained is often enough but delved from its own inner depths and, when reality gives the lie to the knowledge put forward as acquired, the mind is more disposed to find fault with what is than to hold itself responsible for its mistake. All the more then are to be feared these aggravated risks of error due to the overweening confidence we repose in our thought, when the object to be studied is none other than our mind. *Then*, less than ever is the latter doubtful of competence: *then* does immediate introspection, apparently reconciling both the subject and its object, seem to render realizable the Socratic

injunction: Know Thyself. Indeed, we deem it suffices us to be dowered with consciousness that we may comprehend the how and the why of our deeds as of our judgments, of our ideals as of our life. But the bankruptcy of this postulate springs from the continuing obscurity of the so-called moral sciences, despite the so many efforts that the anonymous traditions of sects and schools and the original, personal improvisations of the great metaphysical geniuses have devoted to the resolution of that Sphinx's riddle that Man is to himself.

It seems then that the time is now come to make trial of a converse method—one that finds in introspection not solutions, but problems only. The fertile analogy of the natural sciences gives ground for hope that fewer ill-set problems, and fewer question-begging solutions, will be met with when problems and solutions alike are only entered upon in respect of an objective datum that it is nobody's business to make other than it is, and which it will be the task of the investigator to know, and not to create or transmogrify. To this end it suffices to be persuaded that mind may know itself objectively, provided that it is apprehended not in itself but in its manifestations. Though not exclusively of the mind's fashioning—since man is not isolated from the universe—human reality yet bears in every feature traces of the mind. It would be rash to conclude that, in things human, thought is reduced to an epiphenomenon, in that it neither accomplishes all, nor even anything. Economic data bear witness to our needs; those of religion to our aspirations: artistic, juridical, ethical, or logical data to our diverse

kinds of ideal; and the data of political history to our sufferings and our Sisyphean labours in attempting perpetual readjustment to the ever-changing conditions that so little depend upon ourselves. These are so many data—that is to say, forms of existence independent of our arbitrament. They are written in historical reality: it is open to us to misunderstand but not to change, much less efface them.

Away with the illusion that has too long encouraged the belief that mind, in its essence, can only be approached by direct coincidence with its autonomous and living action! Positive philosophy is no more reducible to intellectual or sensible intuition, or to reasoning based on the one or the other—that is to say, to thought in action—than is æsthetics—the analysis of art—to be confounded with artistic creation. The positive attitude excludes identification even with life itself, for observation and frank spontaneity are never coincident. Let us not thence conclude too hastily that there is an inevitable divergence between being and knowing: there is difference only between being which is accomplishing itself and being that is accomplished. It is the latter alone which permits positive investigation: while there is nothing positively knowable except completed being, there is no possible approximation to being in the making other than by induction that is the outcome of analysis of the static conditions of existence. Though science should never adequately express life, it must not be said that science does not afford the surest means of acquiring information concerning this creation that we call life. The converse claim to grasp the essence of the real as a function of life

itself, is the very antipodes of the positive spirit, and otherwise called the mystic attitude. From this pretension we abstain, on principle.

Now, we should mistake did we suppose the inner workings of thought to be only revealed by speculation. Thus attained they are grasped only under their contingent and arbitrary aspects; that which they present to an individual consciousness. Let us not shrink from repeating that they may be found expressed in those realities, *sui generis* yet completely objective—the works of the spirit. A landscape—above all, if painted—corresponds to a state of soul: a plastic attitude, a mimicry, is, literally, an emotion: institutions are normative purposes, either behind or in advance of the average state of consciousness: a lyric poem or a drama may bear witness to inward crisis; a novel, even a romance, epitomizes many a biography. But, of all the productions of mind, those which most reveal the speculative exigences of thought are just those wherein this thought has explicitly formulated these demands: to wit, metaphysics. Even though these abstract constructs in no wise enlighten us concerning the things that they are supposed to probe to the bottom, they do frankly tell us in what manner their authors have understood intelligibility. Of little or no value in respect of knowledge of the real, they do at least bring into the full light of day the assemblage of postulates that at a given period, or in a certain intellectual environment, would have been spontaneously set up as necessary and universal conditions of being. Proof this that therein are to be found at least some authentic demands of the spiritual

life! An objective notion of mental laws is only to be gained by analysis of the productions wherewith thought has been satisfied, doubtless because thought has made them in its own image

What is important here is to regard philosophies as materials no less real than other data, no matter what. They are extant in beliefs, in oral traditions, in written treatises, and in the interpretations which are grafted on to these original bases; they corroborate them, whether designed to complete or to undermine them. Doubtless then, an appreciation is incorporated with a fact; but where are we to find a spiritual fact with which no evaluations are mingled? These appreciations are themselves facts. The products of thought must be thought if they are to be known, but if they are apprehended objectively they will not be less known than thought. Plato does not exist simply as an individual who died in 347 B.C.; nor merely in the literal import of his works. The understanding of his labour by Aristotle, by Plotinus, and by Leibnitz are facts no less real than the initial system. The triumph of criticism—mainspring and supreme safeguard of history—consists in piercing the clouds that inevitably veil all testimony, so that the documentary—that is to say, the objective—value concealed thereby may transpire. Far from banishing, thought delights in and establishes objectivity, provided that we know—and this we can learn—how to eliminate the accidental particularities of the concrete individuality. The elaboration of a positive philosophy requires, then, that thought should study itself in its productions whose objectivity yields in nothing to

that of natural phenomena. But the products of thought are ordered in time no less than in space. Hence the data of philosophical experience must be sought in geography and history, but above all in history; not in an analysis of concepts in some abstract and timeless world. Such an experiment possesses its own fit and proper rules.



## CHAPTER II

### OF THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

The immanence in history of the philosophical datum by no means implies that, in philosophy, the positive method reduces to the historical. Were it otherwise, philosophy would consist only in its own history; and, since the theory of the influence exerted upon humanity by the material conditions of existence is called historical materialism, philosophy would be conceived as a sort of historical spiritualism—the theory of the part played by thought in human evolution. It is, however, as much the duty of philosophy to prosecute investigations into that total, that unique storehouse of facts which we call history, as it is for her to be mistress of the situation—that is to say, to preserve liberty to seek documentation where she will, to appraise by appropriate standards, to vary the field of exploration, and independently to analyse the ground surveyed in accordance with the hypothesis selected. We only plan to extend our knowledge in order that the more we know, the better we may understand; we only peer more distantly in order that we may see more plainly and more clear. Both ends are secured when we discern fundamental likeness beneath apparent dissimilitude. All judgment is comparison: every comparison an interpretation of diversity by way of identity. Positive philosophy as conceived by a Comte or a Durkheim, and especially

as we try to define it, differs from history in so far as, in the quest of the same throughout the other, she finds a succedaneum for the Utopian search for laws in a series of facts which (for so it seems) do never recur. Let us observe that this discipline, far from leading back to history, will be in principle inverse and complementary thereto. For the historian is only concerned with resemblances that he may the better establish, by their light, the secret and subtle distinctions that finally differentiate the concrete data into irreconcilable disparities: whilst the positive philosopher insists that all variety should reveal before his eyes, if not a systematization of hard and fast laws, at any rate the constancy of certain conditions and some generality of certain facts.

In support of the assertion that positive philosophy must be comparative philosophy, we would in the first place make deliberate appeal to some assumptions based upon analogy. One after another, the different "moral sciences" are becoming positive in being comparative. Philology only emerged from blind gropings and achieved a definite method when the discovery was made that the majority of European languages bear witness to a mutual relationship: the linguistic unity of the Indo-European family, once recognized, enables this group of idioms to be contrasted with other groups, no less individual, but built up around other and independent types. These families, foreign to each other, undergo modification as a result of multiple cross influences, and yet in relative isolation: from a confrontation of their parallel development arise observations to be reckoned among the most precise and

securely founded known to science. Only to the extent that therein is outlined a comparative theory does jurisprudence stabilize on a basis that is largely humanist, instead of soaring into the abstract ideal or reducing to traditionalistic conservatism. Anthropology and ethnography amass evidence only that some day they may justify a comparative interpretation of human evolution. The term 'comparative psychology' is hazarded to indicate a science of the mental functions that will, in this respect, throw light on man from a study of the beast, and on the beast by a study of man. Thus too, more than one of the natural sciences has progressed only by becoming comparative. Such are anatomy and physiology, which first made giant strides when enabled to place in parallel orders and kingdoms illustrating highly diverse types of life and organisation.

Nothing then, for positive philosophy, is so important as to contrast, the one with the other, various markedly differentiated mental structures. This philosophy, which ought to be comparative, should not take man, or human reason, but the different types of humanity or reason, for its subject : and, the more these types differ, the more fruitful can we hope their confrontation will show itself to be. Just as physiology made scarcely any progress so long as the vertebrates only were analysed : just as linguistics allowed what is of essential interest to escape so long as it did not go beyond the grammatical study of a single language even though pursued through its many dialects ; so philosophy cannot achieve positivity so long as its investigations are restricted to the thought of our own civilization. We take as man in himself, as *Man sui generis*, perhaps

the Græco-Roman sage, or the devout believer of the Middle Ages: the humanist of the Renaissance or the natural man of Rousseau: or again, the citizen of 1789, or the modern European: so many individuals of the same family; successive offshoots from a common stem. To compare these diverse physiognomies is not without a picturesque interest, and one that captivates the historian avid for local colour; yet, each being but a variation on a single theme, we are prone to take what they may have in common as characteristic of humanity. On the other side of the account this illusion dissipates in face of the most modest inquiry into the mentality of other races: ethnographers and anthropologists undermine more metaphysical prejudices when they contrast the "civilized" members of the white races with the "savages" than has sceptical argument or philosophical criticism been able to destroy during centuries of controversy.

Once again, it does seem that this antithesis between "the civilized" and "the non-civilized" is destined to disappear, for there is no society without some civilization. But history abounds in distinctions, be it of race, of nationality, or of culture, which split up humanity into clearly-cut types endowed throughout the ages with a sometimes considerable persistence. The Egyptian nation, the Semitic peoples, and pre-Columbian America present in this way a certain individuality. The greater the independence and diversity of these societies, the more does their comparison teach us. Just as each had, or must have had a history, so each had, or must have had a philosophy: for man changes, and man thinks. No one

philosophy has the right to put itself forward as co-extensive with the human mind, but each philosophy, even the meanest, holds an evidential value. Positive philosophy will apply its comparative investigation to all types of humanity.

The vast expanse of this domain by no means implies that its exploration is either an impossible or an endless task. The poverty of our resources reduces the greatest of undertakings only too easily to the modest capacity of our strength. Moreover, we should mistake did we suppose that the task becomes less and less manageable as its scope widens. Our conception of life, far from becoming more complex, was as much simplified as deepened from the very moment when we contrasted the monocellular organisms rendered visible by the microscope with those that are multicellular. Only since we know how to examine them in terms of other families of languages can we penetrate the spirit of the Indo-European idioms. The scientific mind did not await the codification of experimental methods by John Stuart Mill before convincing itself that diversity of instances and variation of conditions facilitate the inference of laws. The comparative method—a simple adaptation to human affairs of this general method—does not become less precise as information accrues on the contrary, it can but gain in certainty.

In any case, we can never forget that, if science be a collective undertaking, it is none the less individuals who carry it out, and that, if the enterprise is to be open to a phalanx of workers, it must not appear unrealizable to any one of them. To this end some allocation of

the fields of investigation between the many explorers must intervene. But powers must be taken to classify those enterprises that do not all appear either so urgent or so feasible. Thus, to contrast the seemingly non-civilized peoples with our own civilization would be a sort of preliminary way of awakening us from our "slumberous dogmatism". But it would be no more right to comprehend the Whites by means of the savages than it would be to interpret the mentality of savages by that of the Whites. Both will only be known—that is to say, properly placed in human relativity—when the study of these and of those will be linked together by the examination of the intermediate types of mankind. The peoples most different from us will cease to seem to us primitive and, conversely, we shall recognize in ourselves much that is aboriginal; from the moment that the pseudo-uncivilized are considered from the historical point of view, they will lose this incommensurability with peoples whose development is historical that, for the time being, characterizes them as primitives, as natives, as aboriginals: in coming to terms with history they will incorporate themselves with humanity. The most urgent task then, is to apply the comparative method to those human strata which, so to speak, interpose between the more and the less "civilized"; and herein, happily, history is henceforward successful.

Thus, although comparative philosophy ought to be universal, we have the right and the duty, by virtue of a methodological opportunity, to restrict it for the present to the study of those peoples already dowered with a history.

For the rest, little as we are able to illuminate the historic times by the dark earlier ages, the arcana of prehistory will only be reduced by the progress of history, gradually pursued from the more to the less known. And amongst the fractions of mankind susceptible of historical investigation, only three are met with whose development has taken place in strict parallel during some three millennia ; these three are precisely those of which the past has been or can be best elucidated. We refer to Europe, India, and China. We are obliged to take Europe as our point of departure because we can only comprehend our neighbour relatively to ourselves, even though we learn not to judge him by ourselves. At the other extreme of our "Eurasianic" continent, China offers to our thirst for knowledge those marvellous annals, of an objectivity beyond compare, that must excite the envy of our own culture. In the middle zone India, it is true, does not form the only hyphen between Westerners and Far Easterners, but she alone provides an unbroken tradition from the epoch of Greek and Chinese origins to our days. So should she also play a chief part in the investigations of the comparative philosopher, in spite of the obscurities of her history, no less because of her wide-flung influence radiating from Persia to Japan and from Africa to Oceania than by reason of her ethnic and, above all, linguistic relationship with our western civilizations. Despite the greater antiquity of other centres of culture, these three types of mankind must furnish the basis of comparative research, for it is in relation to them that the greater number of the other types are placed in universal history.

If then nothing that is human should, in theory, remain foreign, alien, to the positive philosopher, the confrontation of the mental structures in the three greatest centres of mankind is in fact and ever will be the essential portion of his task. Certainly, the peoples that we have in mind cannot vaunt themselves of a civilization so old as that of the Babylonians or the Egyptians: they have not weighed so heavily at every period as the nomadic Turco-Mongols upon almost the whole of the civilized world: nor did they, like the spirit of Islam, stamp with their impress the peoples of all regions of the Old World. But their history develops in a triple and perfectly continuous synchronicity ever since at least fifteen hundred years before our era: their literature, their arts, and their sciences have blossomed exuberantly in harmony with three traditions, conscious, each one, of its own ideal; and their religious beliefs, their social aspirations, have never ceased to stimulate grandiose speculative flights of which each one, and not only that of the European peoples, must form part of the "perennis philosophia".

No one, doubtless, will be found to contest the existence of a mass of material for comparisons of lively interest between the various human types. But many positive minds consider the so-called comparative method, if the truth be told, to be methodical only in intention and name. The historian, by virtue of his "personal equation" more responsive to concrete specificities than to analogies, will maintain that in the present state of our knowledge any



attempt at synthesis is more than premature ; and that it must be postponed, if not indefinitely, at any rate till some future date. The methodologist will find no difficulty in remarking that everything more or less resembles or differs from everything else in accordance with the disposition or ingenuity of the observer ; and that the most capricious similitudes and unexpected differentiations present themselves to our gaze, provided we know how to vary appropriately the angle of vision from which the fact is perceived.

Moreover, the often vaunted comparative procedures have yielded only barren results : to judge one fact as a junction of another—how odd a fashion of respecting the originality of the fact ! What scientific probity ! When the encyclopædists seem, as comparators, to have some conception of positivity, they show themselves better advised : they seek in facts but instances that they may support their ideas, and in human relativities but arguments against a naive dogmatism. To claim, on the other hand, to confront facts without preconceived ideas, is to start out on an indefinite investigation in which thought has no purchase unless, indeed, a tacit and favourable *petitio principii* does not ensure beforehand the desired conclusion.

Objections of this kind are not to be gainsaid : we must always keep in mind their salutary warning ; even their fundamental truth. But there is no truth that is not relative. The historian must be reassured by a respect for the fact equal to his own : similitudes show themselves instructive only through differences ; and nothing more competently puts in relief the specificity of each fact than its

comparison with others of the same order. Let us add that, if synthesis here is always premature, it is always necessary, if only to illumine or even to inspire analysis ; its recognition as provisional suffices to render it harmless. As for the diversity of aspects presented by the real, and the multiplicity of standpoints that may be adopted by the observer, we have therein only a duplex relativity which, far from excluding the possibility of exact notation, varies its opportunities *ad infinitum*. Finally, the risk of the *petitio principii* does not seem more serious than in any other inquiry : that which is sought is as a rule that which, if not actually found, is at least anticipated. No man of science forbids himself the use of hypothesis which is only dangerous when self-deception is entertained in respect of its *a priori* anticipatory character.

We do not deny that the deliberate employment of the comparative method in history and philosophy has rarely been signalized by great success. But it is only lately that the reign of the idea of positivity has been inaugurated in these matters. The history and the thought of the most important civilizations were until quite recently either unappreciated or ignored even by the participants in these civilizations. More than one epoch did have the intuition of human unity throughout the diversity of human races, but the objective materials were lacking. Now for the first time most peoples think of themselves in terms of the whole world, and all human data fall under the jurisdiction of scientific knowledge. Although specialization in knowledge may involve the distribution among a large number of investigators of documentation which the most highly dowered

could not possess, save in rudimentary fashion, it needs but a concerted programme for links to appear between the investigations, and confirmation or rectification of those results obtained in isolation. Within the compass of philosophic investigation, the simplistic syncretism of the eclectics has brought discredit upon comparative expositions; but it seems by no means rash to hope that, with less ignorance and more method, all hasty, factitious, and superficial approximations may be avoided and inferences, not only well-founded but fruitful, may be attained.

Moreover, we not merely avow, we proclaim that comparative philosophy has devoted itself up to now to puerility and insignificance. The analyst of the human mind, possessing no points of comparison except within the civilization to which he himself belonged, found it impossible to make use of any reliable comparative method. All those amenable to the same culture, even across the centuries, are subject to the same environmental conditions, the source of manifold resemblances. Not only is there something constant that persists in their atmosphere, but a general traditional form, growing ever more definite, shapes them in a common mould. Those who come after inherit the problems set by their forbears: even those who at the beginning of their speculations have wished not to know "what Adam knew" have, willy-nilly, thought as did their predecessors. To compare Descartes with Plato, Kant with Aristotle, is certainly one way of getting a better understanding of their systems, but is not a topical use of the comparative method, because the moderns were more

or less acquainted with the ancients. But if, on the other hand, I put side-by-side Socrates and Confucius, St. Thomas Aquinas and Chou-hi, I get from the first, behind innumerable disparities, a glimpse of such a family resemblance as is to be explained by no connexion in fact, but which vindicates an analogous rôle, played indeed in very different fashion and in a different environment.

In measure as the comparative method finds legitimate application difficult when it is limited to the examination of a single series of thoughts, so does it rise in value when several more or less independent lines of descent can be placed in parallel. Impartial estimates of several spiritual descents, summary though they may be, offer more scope than the full fathoming of mutually related systems; for the aim of the positive attitude is rather to know than to comprehend, or, better, claims to comprehend only by dint of knowing.

The irremediable invalidity of the comparative method being in no wise proved, it is ours to define the conditions of its legitimate employment. If comparative philosophy, as aforesaid literary criticism, is to be delivered over to individual phantasy, far better that it were at once renounced. But it so happens that, even now, literary and artistic studies are also seeking how to provide themselves with a method that is at once rigorous and comparative. They will only achieve their end—or, so at least, it seems to us—by confining themselves to a programme identical with that we set before ourselves. On the other hand, if

comparative philosophy is to dissemble arbitrariness behind a screen of methodological pedantry, let us abstain from adulterating the authentic results of historical learning by attempting to integrate them in purely verbal conclusions. But comparative philosophy is no longer predestined to error or futility by any inherent weakness in its conception, encouraging analogies even incline us to consider that it, too, is capable of exactitude and may prove to be fruitful.

## CHAPTER III

### THE POSITIVE NOTION OF ANALOGY

The scheme of intelligibility proper to the comparative method consists neither in identity nor in distinction. In the former case it would infer like laws from a multiplicity of facts : in the latter it would specify the irreducible originality of empirical data. It would lead up either to a science or a history. Comparative philosophy, though positive, will be neither the one nor the other. Its guiding principle will be analogy, reasoning in accordance with what in mathematics is called a proportion, that is to say, the equality between two ratios —  $A$  is to  $B$  as  $Y$  is to  $Z$ . Such an equivalence is compatible with no matter how great an heterogeneity between  $A$  and  $Y$ ,  $B$  and  $Z$ . To render evident such an equivalence it is by no means necessary to state explicitly the integral content of the four terms : an even superficial knowledge of them may be sufficient. To make use of an instance already hinted, and which will be justified in a later chapter, Confucius was in China that which Socrates was in Greece : he who frees the speculation of his own time from a generalized sophistry ; he who, by application of a new organon, prepares new dogmatisms. But it stands to reason that, apart from the analogy in rôle, the one personage differs almost completely from the other, as does the Middle Kingdom from Hellas.

If, instead of recognizing a similarity of rôle or of function, the comparator tries to attain to a content supposedly

identical with the phenomena, his enterprise is extremely likely to appear deceptive to authorities who are exact and scrupulous. Thus, the English revolution, in common with the French revolution of 1789 and the recent revolution in Russia, was responsible for causing the political direction of the State to change hands: but this does not imply the slightest identity of programme. On the other hand, the identity of two phenomena may be fortuitous: Montpellier-le-Vieux only apparently presents the aspect of a town in ruins: philologists cite numerous words of different languages which are literally the same yet have no linguistic affinity; naturalists point to organs which a functional identity has rendered alike, though their histological or anatomical genesis completely differentiates them. In philosophy identities of this kind dissolve equally under examination. The eclectic spiritualism of the first third of the nineteenth century has suffered by reposing too great confidence in classification, by the institution of the theory of faculties, and by exaggerating the value of classing systems. When Plato, Descartes, and Berkeley are all alike referred to as idealists, the risk is run of losing the just sense of all that separates these three thinkers. Yet, after all, and despite the diversity of times and places, they constitute a filiation.

What is to be said of a rubric "materialism" wherein Leucippus, Lucretius, La Mettrie, and Büchner jostle cheek by jowl with the Cārvākas and with Yang-chou? Matter is now a postulate of the absolute; now a perceptible phenomenon; now a principle of physical explanation; or, again, the scapegoat of sensuality, or atoms,

forces, or simple relations. Comparative philosophy finds but a caricature of what she should become, in these classifications of systems under so many vocables ending in -ism, frank barbarisms, not only in letter but in spirit.

For the rest, in all philosophies it is often enough the content that is of least importance. This content, as a rule, is just that which the ruling ideas of the epoch or of established tradition have imposed on the thought of the philosopher. The same mind in another environment—if the supposition be permitted—might have built up an analogous framework with other materials. A work is philosophic in degree as it is systematic, and that which renders it systematic is the method employed—the logic to which the arrangement of the materials is obedient. Very different doctrines may submit to the same logic. Thus, the reconstruction of the brute fact, in the case of Descartes by way of simple essences, and in the case of the Yogācāras by way of dharmas, is the outcome of a mechanism rather than of a finalism, although the theory of ideas—the European prototype of this doctrine—or some similar Iranian theory—its Asiatic prototype—must have been first conceived rather under the aspect of finality than of mechanism. Simple essences and dharmas are of value rather as constructive principles, after the fashion of atoms, than as ideals—so many different applications, in the order of thought, of the same mechanistic logic. An idealist may in this way more nearly resemble a materialist than a spiritualist—one more occasion to cause us to hold suspect classifications which connote terms that are less precise than pedantic. We will not now tarry



to show that, on the other hand, antithetic ways of thinking lead not unseldom to dogmas that are similar. Thus *A* is a believer because he is a quietist ; *B* on account of his despair : the one because of his certainty, the other in order the more freely to leave his intellect in dubiety.

The comparative method will be spared most ambiguities and risks if, in the beginning, less attention is paid to interpretations than to facts. To tell the truth, objectivity is very largely an affair of degree ; and the part played by an individual, provided he be regarded in terms of his epoch, affords greater objectivity than does the appreciation of a doctrine. Alexander and Napoleon, as men, present no affinity beyond that of political and military genius, the one, moreover, differing strongly in these respects from the other. But what justifies their comparison is the creation by them both of ephemeral empires as fragile as the individualities that forged them. If Açoka and Kaniska deserved to be called, the one the Constantine, the other the Clovis of Buddhism, it is certainly not so much as individuals as by reason of their attitude in respect of a religion in process of development. Considerations of this nature may be absolved from arbitrariness, for a likeness of relations in no sense implies assimilation of different terms. Less rigid than logical identity, of which the application to human data is very limited, not to say exceptional ; supple enough to accommodate itself to the specific character of spiritual facts, analogy finds legitimate employment in the consideration of such parallel series as the three civilizations indicated in the preceding chapter as furnishing the very foundations of comparative history.

The justification of approximations between independent descents is not the sole advantage of such a procedure. It possesses a not less appreciable merit in the readiness with which it eliminates many classifications, often uncritically adopted, and which discredit none but a pseudo-comparative method. We have already cited the rubrics under which the various speculative or practical attitudes are classed. Certain rubrics must now be mentioned that seem to be positive because they are supported by geographical or historical distinctions, yet are as little justifiable as are the others. To this category belong the triad consecrated in our civilization—but therein only—of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Era, and the no less banal antithesis between East and West. These concepts bear the imprint of a despotic subjectivity. For the Mediterranean peoples established to westward of the world of the ancients, the remainder of civilization, situated to east of them, was lumped together under one vague term—the East. Since the Western peoples underwent profound modification during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of our era they have come to put modern times in antithesis with the mediaeval epoch; and these same peoples had already divided their past into two phases, separated by the transformation of Græco-Roman society under the double influence of Christianity and invasion. Without denying the relative value of this triple distinction, we cannot forget to what an extreme point and with what harmful consequences it has been carried. Furthermore, its application beyond our European environment could only lead to misunderstandings. China and India, which

suffered many barbarian incursions no less transforming than the irruption of Germans or Franks into Roman Gaul, or of Avars or Goths into Italy, as well as religious upheavals no less decisive than the conversion of the Latin world to a cult of Judaistic origin, did for all that never cut up into sections the continuous thread of their traditions.

So much of these conventional distinctions as is well founded cannot fail to be thrown into relief by the truly comparative method, whilst the element of empty verbalism that is implicit in them will cease to mislead whosoever may fail to take it into account.

The abandonment of the prejudices which might imperil the objective use of analogy represents only a negative condition of the sound method. We shall not refuse to compare an Asiatic fact with a European fact, under the fallacious pretext that the East and the West bear witness to mentalities that are distinct and irreducible even when they appear resemblant. Rightfully, all phenomena are susceptible of confrontation, and such confrontation must show itself the more fruitful the more isolated are the series of which the phenomena form part. At the same time it would be a great mistake to consider that the facts of different series are individually comparable from the outset ; for this would involve the immediate reappearance of that illusion which flatters itself that it can discern likenesses at random by mere inspection. If on the other hand we constrain ourselves to seek only proportions of the type  $\frac{A}{B} = \frac{Y}{Z}$ ,

the complexity of the conditions of resemblance requires from the observer an exact analysis.

The higher guarantee of objectivity proceeds from this, that—

(1) Four, and not merely two, factors have to be considered ;

(2) In each ratio the numerator bears a particular relation to the denominator, as, for example, that of the part to the whole. Such is the case in the analogy—

$$\frac{\text{Socrates}}{\text{Greek Sophism}} = \frac{\text{Confucius}}{\text{Chinese Sophism}}$$

which may be thus symbolized—

$$\frac{s}{S} = \frac{c}{C}$$

What is this but to say that the facts will only be reckoned legitimately comparable if they belong to environments which are in themselves comparable? We are perfectly well aware that the environments themselves are equally facts and that the distinction between a fact and its environment is entirely relative. But, in our opinion, a confrontation will be all the less arbitrary the more widely it is extended, with an equal exactitude, to encompass the two facts. The only way to prevent anything whatever from being assimilated to no matter what is to exercise that scrupulous criticism which forbids the possibly fortuitous resemblance between two several data detached from their circumstances being taken as significant. But, though to-day we agree, albeit but recently, to esteem knowledge of the contemporaries or the predecessors of a thinker

relevant to the understanding of his doctrines, it would not seem that any historian of philosophy has accorded the preponderant place to the evolution of the intellectual, moral, and social environment that is due to it in the explanation of metaphysical systems. The history of philosophy conceived as a series of monographs no more possesses the character of a positive investigation than a collection of photographs constitutes an anthropology. Individualities, above all, creative personalities, only become the material for science in so far as they are examined in relation to their epoch, for they represent exceptional rather than normal cases. Comparative philosophy, taking history as its basis, should make historical intelligibility its own. The cause of an event is only its "site" in a more general evolution, because analysis resolves into an interaction of phenomena.<sup>1</sup> We admit, therefore, that the comparability of two facts is a function of the comparability of their environments.

<sup>1</sup> Seignobos, "Les conditions pratiques de la recherche des causes dans le travail historique," *Bull. de la Soc. fr. de phil.*, July, 1907, No. 7.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE POSITIVE CONCEPTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Facts of a spiritual order, not less than all other happenings, are relative to their situation, at once geographical and historical. If this elementary truth is ignored, there is the risk that not only the linking up of human concepts but the succession of systems as well may be left suspended in the abstract. Thus, as we have seen, the so-called history of philosophy is as a rule nothing more than a sequence of theoretical memoirs, at the most eked out by as many biographies. In these days, when the natural sciences are constantly demonstrating that an organism is to be explained by its conditions of existence, the time is now come for the positive study of the mind to apply a similar principle to the manifestations of thought.

The widest environment to which a spiritual fact may belong is the civilization that has witnessed it and given it birth. This concept of civilization, too abstract for the historians, too concrete for the philosophers, is abandoned to the ethnographers, the only men of science who undertake a classification at least, if not a methodical and critical examination of civilizations. The value of this concept lies in this, that it uncompromisingly designates the local and temporary factors in whose ambit a human event is produced. The diverse civilizations constitute, at a given date, environments that are contemporaneous,

but locally distinct ; and, throughout the ages, at any given point on this earth, a tradition that gives its imprint to any manifestation of thought or activity. A vague enough idea, without doubt, and superfluous if we insist on limiting investigation within the confines of a single one of these environments, for in such case the general and essential aspects are the least obvious. Yet an idea that becomes more definite in proportion as glimpses, however furtive, are obtained of a number of different kinds of humanity. Tradition and distinctive local features are to be mutually inferred, for the topographical situation that places man in nature no less than in human geography imposes on him his appropriate point of view, and the ideas persisting in a group take on a "local colour" that binds them to the soil. An investigation of nomads confirms this observation, for, either these wandering peoples remain in regions which, although perhaps of great extent, possess characters in common and the same general situation—such as the Turco-Mongols in the steppes separating the Caspian from Manchuria—or else they settle in countries very different from their primitive habitat and—like the Arabs settled in Iran—change their customs as a result of fusion with the population of these new districts.

The notion of civilization affords the further unique advantage of exhibiting a hallmark, like a special signature borne by each product of a centre of human culture. Every collectivity, by reason of its spatial situation and its traditions throughout the ages, impresses its particular mark upon the different forms of its own activity ; this special character represents at once the legacy of old ideals

and the frame within which future ideals are necessarily conceived. When it is a question of artistic productions no one can be in doubt about it: a common style, or at least a continuity of stylistic evolution affects the literature or the plastic art of a given civilization as a whole. If we are not struck by the same fact in matters of spiritual output, it is because here the point of view of comparative morphology is not imposed on sensible observation as when works of art of divers provenance are approximated, and because it requires a greater volume of information to enable a system to be appraised than to recognize the origin of an art treasure.

A comparative theory of civilization, then, will be by right the first essential of a positive study of mind. It is more important than a comparative ethnology or philology, for experience bears witness that neither race nor language mould the future of peoples to its own destiny, but that these peoples become that which an ideal—the resultant and the primary cause of their traditions—makes of them. There is scarcely a culture that has not been formed by the mingling of different races, and that has not had to accommodate itself to intermittent invasion; there is scarcely one which has not been consolidated through a competition of idioms—for, as a rule, the at least relatively autochthonous and the immigrant make use of different tongues. We shall give an example of this comparative theory of civilization, limited to a consideration of Europe, India, and China, in Part II, Ch. II; but we may already suspect that in a like case the plan of the comparison, instead of presenting itself as a proportion, is



reduced to simple parallels, since the investigation embraces milieux so wide that they themselves cannot be placed in wider milieux, if we leave out of account that enigma prehistory and that abstraction we call humanity. But the parallels thus determinable should supply us with landmarks and points of departure which will enable us to measure by each other the happenings in different series ; and they play a part which, metaphorically speaking, recalls that of the ruled squares used by draughtsmen in copying models—vertical and transversal lines permitting the objects drawn to be placed in their right perspective. In like fashion sequence and contemporaneousness allow us to reconstruct filiations whether independent or interferent. Let it be added that this warp and woof of comparative anthropology may admit of maximum exactitude, for once the dates in each domain are established by authoritative specialists, the comparative chronology of the human past constitutes a *κρῆμα εἰς ἀεί*. Even if the intersections are tight here and loose there, or cross each other without regularity, they none the less form the canvas on which all the subsequent work will be embroidered. For lack of this foundation, the achievement of erudition in history, the relativity of the different civilizations but lately provided the New Academy, Montaigne, and Voltaire with arguments that were exploited against dogmatism by carping critics ; but some day, based on an objective chronology, this relativity will supply the elements of a positive conception of mind.

Any given civilization will be found to comprise certain secondary environments ; art, manners, law, and religion—which share its cultural characters. Of these, each is co-extensive with the civilization to which it belongs and, for the mind, each one constitutes a traditional system of speculation. Although each of these concerns philosophic thought—which is never isolated from them except by some abstraction by which more is lost than gained—the environment *par excellence* of spiritual facts is religion.

We do not fail to recognize that philosophy is distinguished from the religions in respect of objective, and above all, by method. Neither do we fail to understand that already the present and above all the future of free thought proclaims its independence of religious speculation. But the past, very nearly in its entirety, bears witness either to the identity or the close relationship of the two orders of contemplative thought. To consider but the historical period, free thought is not much more recent than is religion, for singularly bold expressions of it are found in the earliest periods of many civilizations. Indeed, free thought itself has contributed to the prosperity of the religious idea, for more than one philosophy, including positive philosophy, has metamorphosed into dogma, or even cult, and, often enough, it is thanks to its own autonomy that thought has freed minds from former beliefs and has impressed upon such minds the prestige of its own concepts, predestined thus to give birth to new dogmas. Religion contains the philosophy of peoples who have no other system, and among those who do possess one there is, as it were, a reciprocal osmosis between the two contiguous categories.

The most summary comparative study teaches us, moreover, that the, to us, familiar antithesis of science and faith is only to be found in our own western culture, the products of two streams, flowing in one bed and yet incompletely merged—Jewish fanaticism and the Hellenic *Θεωπία*. Elsewhere and everywhere religion on the one hand and philosophy or science on the other are not antagonistic in their contrast ; more often than not they are complementary to one another ; the clearest and most highly evolved thought appearing to be the culmination of a sacred yet dim tradition ; or the meditations of the elect clarifying and making plain the incoherent confusion of popular superstition.

Thus does religion form the anonymous and collective background against which stand out the systems conceived by master minds, and the foundation on which their system reposes. If science is an affair rather of the general than the particular, it is through the religions that the philosophies must be understood. Let it be added that such a method offers this special advantage that of the two it is the religions that admit the most readily of objective knowledge ; for they are reflected in ceremonies, manners, codes, and literature, which afford unexceptionable information about them as precise as it is various. Moreover, in fact as in law religion takes precedence over philosophy. The “*primum vivere*” was the law of all collectivities ; the further back we trace it and the more “primitive”, so-called, the character of those who practised it, the better does religion provide for its adepts. In days when philosophy was perfunctory and scarcely dreamed of,

religion assured to men the control of nature, hence their means of subsistence in this world and the next.

It is the sovereign and direct efficacy of rites that is first hypostatic in gods and then sublimated in concepts. The philosopher only essays to recreate the world mentally because he is taking up the task of the priest, who upholds or re-establishes the cosmic order by bringing divine forces into play.

Ancient India gives striking expression of this universal fact in designating by the same term, *puruṣa*, man, the first sacrificer, identical, indeed, with the first victim—and the thinking mind.

Almost every philosophic idea—from the notion of law, whether natural or moral, to those of the soul, of nature and of matter—has been thus a religious idea. So, too, philosophic problems follow behind the problems of religion, and if lay thought cherishes the ambition to treat, in its turn, of the relation between speculation and life around which the great edifices of religious spirituality have been reared in the past, it will only inherit the constant task of religion.

Thus, if the study of mind is to be attacked in a positive manner, it is not enough to make this modest concession to history—that the utility of the history of philosophy be recognized. Cognizance must be taken also of the community of interests—a community with which history is saturated—between philosophy and the religions. Let there be no fear of thereby shifting the centre of gravity of the speculative problems: on the contrary, therein lies the one means of positive access to the scientific knowledge

of the mind, since throughout almost the entire past the spiritual life has ever taken religious form. Comparative philosophy must be distinguished from the comparative theory of religion, but it will draw therefrom its main sustenance

Art, customs, law, religion—and yet other disciplines—will be found within any given civilization ; if they are the dwelling-place of philosophies they, too, in their turn, may be regarded as plain facts situated within that yet wider environment, a civilization. In correlation with a civilization they thus admit of the use of analogy, expressible in form of a proportion. This use of the comparative method has long since justified itself : what has been called the history of civilization has consisted, in the most suitable cases, in a parallel presentation of the evolution of art, customs, and so on, within the limits of a stated culture. For example, the opposition between “ romantic ” tendencies and “ classic ” tradition has been noted not only in art but in the other manifestations of thought.

There is some truth in saying that Boileau is to Hugo as Descartes is to Fichte, or that, among contemporaries, Ingres is to Delacroix as Thiers to Michelet. But these alternations and synchronisms present a surer interest when remarked in respect of different civilizations, and their objectivity, no less than their speculative value, is enhanced if they are extended to an ever increasing number of aspects of each of the contrasted civilizations. Thus, the resemblance between European Romanticism and

Chinese Taoism seems an almost pointless assimilation so long as we confine ourselves to recognizing, in the case of Rousseau as in that of Lao Tzŭ, an idolatry of nature and a contempt for social prejudices. But the approximation becomes of greater significance if we learn that the arts, in adopting this naturalistic mysticism, have found here as there new themes and procedures ; it becomes still better established when we know that a dialectic calculated to overcome contradiction by the operation of the same postulates, appeared there with Chuang Tzŭ and Li Tzŭ as here with Schelling and Hegel ; it becomes almost an obsession—and as sticklers for objectivity we entertain an itch to rid ourselves of it—when we see in centres so disparate in time and space the same speculative attitude entailing like consequences upon religion, law, social life, logic, poetry, and painting.

The equal reality of analogies and differences between human thoughts and deeds must be clearly laid down. It would be as great a sin against postivity to refuse ever to acknowledge likenesses, even where least expected, as it would be prejudiced to see analogies in everything. The former prejudice is an *a priori* conviction that more than one fine mind has imbibed in the company of the best historians. But, on the other hand, the only absolute rule of history is that radical empirism that conditions our knowledge by respect for facts. And we need not fear to repeat that likenesses—and they, after all, are scattered over with many divergences—may be as well founded in fact as differences. In any case they show themselves so much the less arbitrary if we have regard to the mind

that remarks them—and so much the less contingent, if we analyse the historical data from which they emerge—in measure as they are spread over a larger number of elements of reality.

In this respect the comparative method in no wise differs from other scientific methods : its certitude admits only of probability, though susceptible of more and of less ; its relativity never compromises, but establishes its truth ; its criterion of legitimacy is the agreement of the hypotheses suggested by it with manifold facts in multiple series.

## CONCLUSION

### THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF THOUGHT THE TRUE CRITIQUE OF THE MIND

The methodical use of the comparative method in philosophy, founded on analogical analysis, should bring about the consummation of a science of the mind. Doubtless no one will deny that no such science as yet exists. Hitherto, the human datum in its entirety has never been systematically examined. The position is analogous to that of geography before a proven method had been achieved. Its paraphernalia, woefully lacking in many respects, comprised a jumble of suspect and superficial observations, without explicative bearing; abundant, yet sterile documentation in respect of certain subjects; in other matters, no accepted results, and no possibility of defining the problems. The conditions of progress were, first, an exploration of the planet; then a classing of the facts, and afterwards, the treatment of connected questions—those of geology, oceanography, meteorology, and orography; finally, comprehension of the solidarity between nature and life—palæontology, philological, sociological, and historical geography. In the same way knowledge of humanity, bound up as it is with knowledge of the environment in which it finds itself, requires an exploration as extensive as possible, a systematic clearing of the ground, and a constant delving into the past that the past may



illuminate the present. In respect of certain epochs and certain environments we are, as it were, overwhelmed by our documentation, but so thick are the trees all about us that we cannot see the wood as a whole. Whereas in respect of others—but not necessarily the most distant from our own times—information is lacking. We are in no position to distinguish the essential from the accidental. History is reduced to a recital in which the signs of the times are sought, just as geography was a description in love with the picturesque. In this mass of vague observations, uncorroborated by any experimental test (shall we say: by any form of verification?) there is nothing to recall to us the necessity of natural laws.

Nevertheless, humanity, not only as life, but as thought, is a component of the world. Notwithstanding the difficulty of building up science therefrom in the way that the science of the physical world is built up, the attempt has been made by means of a method that goes further than simple observation; experience—a *fortiori* the analysis of experience—being without limit, an inverse procedure has been tried, to which the name of criticism has been given. Excellent judges have considered that the primary data of the spiritual life are not elementary facts, from which others may be derived by way of combinations, but synthetic functions, conditions of the apprehension of any given fact. The theory of mind should, then be constituted by way of synthesis rather than of analysis, and starting from the perfected mind, rather than from its lower phases. Thus has criticism addressed itself to the spiritual life under its various forms—artistic, scientific,

and philosophic. It has been able to appreciate it; for taste is legitimately formed by the products of human activity; and also to understand it, for who is to understand mind if not the mind itself? But, criticism has not been able to construct a science of the spiritual life—that is to say, to define its laws. Criticism, at least in so far as it does not become comparative, and often enough when boasting so to be, remains arbitrary. It is inherent in the very concept of scientific criticism that such should tend to appraise mental facts in terms of facts which are those of a science, properly so-called, that is to say, as facts which are not mental, but physical, physiological, sociological facts, and so forth. But, although we can thus shed a bright light on thought, we cannot in such fashion appreciate it in its reality. Let us reflect, for example, on the lack of comprehension of religious consciousness too often displayed by alienists when they undertake to explain some great mystic personality. Even philosophical criticism, though it may contrive to get within an ace of the mind, shows itself artificial and ineffectual, whether in issuing decrees as to phenomena in the name of transcendental reason, or seeking proof of a fact itself in the “transcendental” principles inherent in the fact, or in sifting experience with a view of discovering therein the gradual formation of those “categories” that, in the upshot, impose themselves upon it. To judge the fact in the name of law, and, conversely, to claim to derive the necessary from the contingent are, indeed, exploits whereby criticism disqualifies rather than establishes itself. Of all forms of criticism, historical criticism is alone in endeavouring

to build up a science of the mind, working often without glory yet with steady progress, in spite of—or, rather, because of mistakes by the way.

There is not, and cannot be, other than one positive method of so dealing with spiritual phenomena that the instrument of research neither alters them nor allows them to escape: it is to take hold of the phenomena in themselves, and not to apprehend them in terms of something else, and to find out what it is that, when reciprocally confronted, they have, so to speak, to say in criticism of each other; for, though it is futile to criticise a single fact in the light of a principle, knowledge of two well-established facts, provided that we consider them in so far as they are comparable, is equivalent to the limitation of the one by the other: their relative significance becomes clear. Just as when in a sieve the equal sized grains tend to collect together if the whole agglomeration is shaken, so, when we multiply the points of view under which the facts are comparable, a confrontation is sufficient to cause them to range themselves in groups: and this order, which arises of itself, though induced by the skill displayed in the research, presents the character of objectivity, since it imposes itself upon the observer. The slightest variation of the visual angle entrains modifications in the relative position of the facts brought together, just as, in a kaleidoscope, new combinations are built up at the least change of orientation; but each definite question that we address to the datum is answered by it in an invariable fashion. No matter how individual the bearing of a fact, there is nevertheless therein something irreducible against which no power,

concrete or abstract, can prevail: although relative, a fact is absolute. The truth that it contains, partial though it be, shines with a brighter light than the seeming of any so-called principle, so long as that point of view is maintained under which phenomena are considered. Indication of the relation between facts according to the various angles under which they may be envisaged—such should be the means of realizing a science of spiritual phenomena as it was the means of accomplishing an experimental science of nature.

Let us show how comparative philosophy, like all true science, will be something more than the résumé of a particular order of observations. that it will attain, not only the fact but the law, and hence will realize, in the right and positive sense of the word, criticism

The difficulty of investigation, when spiritual and not exclusively material data are concerned, arises from two principal causes: a maximum difficulty in acquiring incontestable facts, and a maximum difficulty in perceiving the angle at which the facts should be confronted.

Every physicist is aware that facts only exist by abstraction: in other words, that a fact is only a mental vision of the datum. It is right to add in respect of the facts of human thought, that they are historical data—as much as to say that they are facts which are no more but which can be restored from the traces they have left. How many are the beliefs that are writ in customs rather than in books, and how many the customs and rites whose existence is only attested for us by the chance discovery of some inscription or object that has escaped the ravages of time!

And how many the actions whose intent nothing can definitively make clear to us, since not only the most sincere, but the most precise testimony invariably presents a tissue of falsities. In the most favourable case, when a thinker has taken care to explain to us his train of thought, we can only reach his speculation through the medium of a language which corresponds rather to the thought of his predecessors, sometimes distant, or to that of his contemporaries, than to his personal idiosyncrasy: yet we are compelled to arrive at it by means of this semi-fallacious expression. These are indubitable difficulties, of which it is important to take full cognizance, but which do not, for all that, justify a sceptical attitude. A block of stone, if it bears an inscription, or some sculptured trace, may form a precious document for the history of ideas. Every expression of a thought, whether that to which its author commits himself, or that which through the zeal of a disciple or the ill-will of an adversary offers us but a confused echo thereof, presents a documentary value more or less restricted, yet unexceptionable. Mental views of the real are aspects of reality. Just as in practice there are precautions which constitute supreme imprudences, so in speculation excessive diffidence of the mind to the mind itself may compromise the attainment of truth. The most arbitrary points of view reflect some aspect of events all the more authentic, on occasion, in that this aspect is the less distorted by average, and hence approximate, judgments. Wherefore, the greater value, in all fields, of an original, even a personal point of view, for, often enough, subjective initiative rescues or restores objectivity.

What does this mean, if not that history has supplied sufficient proof of its capacity to give us the assurance that it is possible to get at what is true behind the partly false yet partly genuine character of all testimony, whether material or spiritual?

The interest of proven facts recognized as such lies in their fitness to be mutually confronted. The more elusive the data in which thought is expressed—data whose aspect is often indistinct and proteiform—the more numerous the chances of comparison; provided that one's own point of view is adjustable, materials as diverse as we could wish will be alike in some respect, so much so, indeed, that rather have we to fear that everything may resemble something else. But, if some approximations seem illusory because they are not dictated by facts, perhaps they will not always remain barren, since history may at any time justify some heretofore arbitrary anticipation by a new element, and occasionally an entirely gratuitous hypothesis may serve to pave the way for discovery. Moreover, amongst possible approximations the more important retain attention on account of their simplicity or their permanence, whereas others have a forced character which deceives nobody. Thus is effected, as in the natural sciences, a sorting out of results of a certain generality from amongst the mass of facts, all disparate but unequally so. Classifications are functions of points of view, but comprehensive points of view, of wide embrace, are the equivalents of *typical facts* at least as valuable to know as those laws that are only generalizations. If they neither possess that generality which consists in pure confusion which dare not coincide

with the universality of rational categories, nor that universality which only belongs to abstract forms, they do possess, *en revanche*, not merely the merit of being accepted, but of illumining with one and the same light data belonging to different series of the human reality. Moreover, natural laws that mathematical deduction has not yet incorporated into science as at present consummated, do not present themselves under any other aspect. For comparative philosophy it is the same thing to be positive or to be critical.

It will be critical in denouncing as of little value all premature or precipitate speculative anticipations. It will be critical by reason of the severity with which it must discipline itself. It will be critical, too, in its ability to lay hold, among the elements of a datum, of those which are so constituent and so characteristic that they are literally the conditions of that datum—the conditions of the law at the price of which facts are realized. Critical it will have to be, not only to such a point as to accomplish philosophy's aim, but to subserve even the interests of objective science, that is to say, of history in particular.

But the theoretical justification of a method risks being illusory so long as this method is not tested by being put to the proof. We shall try several of these tests, without hiding from ourselves the degree to which the insufficiency of our documentation threatens once more to disqualify the comparative attitude. But this attitude, like the use of synthesis after analysis, invariably sets about rebuilding its house after each collapse. It is in the comparative method, not in ourselves, that we place our faith.





## PART II

### CHAPTER I

#### FIRST EXAMPLE : A COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY

The basis for a comparative philosophy must be sought in the succession of attitudes or speculative doctrines in the heart of civilizations which have given themselves to systematic reflexion. Despite the uncertain character of many a date which one would have wished to have ascertained with precision, we shall there find firm and solid data, for the strictness of historical objectivity yields in nothing to the objectivity of physical existence. Each one of these series of facts constituting the oriental cultures, whether Indian or Chinese, embraces an imposing array of efforts after spirituality which are placed in their environments, as in the continuity of human evolution, with a precision of which we are generally ignorant—thanks to our non-initiation into the comparative point of view, and still more so to insufficient information—but which removes from all possibility of scepticism the knowledge of himself susceptible of unlimited perfectability that man can acquire.

Since we desire, not to prejudice the lessons which comparative philosophy can furnish, but to recognize on what it is founded, and then to test its method, we content ourselves with giving in the preceding tables the

chief landmarks showing the intellectual aspect of those civilizations taken as the subject of study. We give them without comment, without attempting to describe the one or more connecting links showing their derivation, without discussing the dates assigned to them. The facts themselves provide their own commentary, that is to say, their appropriateness to their context. The discussion of the dates belongs either to historical or philological criticism. Our task is methodically to juxtapose the three series while keeping before us the findings of history and philosophy.

We shall attempt such juxtaposition, essential to comparative philosophy, for a very few problems chosen not unarbitrarily but because of their significance as occasions serving to determine a method. The prejudicial conditions for particular juxtapositions, and the general frame within which each will fit into its place, is what a comparative chronology should yield

The mere regarding of the chronological data herewith called to mind imposes a few elementary observations, yet observations which would seem to be big with consequences.

1. The most surprising fact is the almost simultaneous appearance at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. of the earliest efforts in philosophic reflexion in the West, in India, and in China. We must recognize in this a datum independent of this appreciation and which, if it is explained some day, will be vindicated by comparative philosophy alone ; meanwhile he would be bold who should say whether this remarkable synchronism is due to mere 'chance' or to the 'logic' of history. From it, however, this lesson

results for us—that the three developments evolve side by side, beginning in approximately the same period.

2. Each of these evolutionary processes is accomplished in relative isolation. The obvious cause is to be found in the immensity of the deserts or in natural obstacles separating the different centres of civilization. This condition of affairs was altogether propitious to that tendency, exhibited by thought in every epoch, to be reflected in action as a consequence of the results obtained by earlier reflexion. Speculation, which in great part nourishes itself, and which, even when it creates something new, elaborates that something with elements of the old, presupposes a tradition even, or chiefly when it attempts to release itself therefrom—which, however, is more rare in the East than in the West. Physical contingencies and moral conditions have also contributed to the dividing-up of humanity into portions which, for long periods, have found themselves isolated in watertight compartments. Whence an undeniable autonomy of development.

3. At certain epochs, on the contrary, the relation of one civilization to another became consistent and almost regular. No doubt communication between the different parts of the earth is more rapid to-day, but it is less close and much less intimate than, for example, was the bond of Hellenism and Indianism from time to time between Europe and Asia, or the mental contact which subsisted between India and the Far East. Such a spread of ideas—as Buddhism or Islam—united formidable masses of human beings distributed throughout two or even three of the civilizations under consideration. Almost throughout

history caravans have journeyed across the face of the earth, even in the most desolate regions, and trading vessels, borne by the monsoon or hugging the coasts, have ploughed their way across the seas. Commerce has cleared the road which intellectual relations followed. Only a few of these contacts have been preserved in the memory of peoples: we are far from possessing in regard to these correlations, which may have been decisive, the accurate data which the Chinese genius for precision has preserved for us anent the dates of the importation of the Buddhist canon into the Middle Kingdom and its translation. We will mention the more memorable of those circumstances which remind us that if humanity has never been other than an ideal, at least it has been one of our most venerable ideals. Too intermittent when they were conscious and systematic, too insignificant when they were conscious and without premeditated design on a large scale, these relations may explain many an "accident" that happened in the middle of each series, but they in no way compromise, and only exceptionally impair, the semi-autonomy of the three cultures.

4. The relative unity of humanity, in spite of its three irreducibly distinct types, results less from the connexions established here or there than from the interpolation of subordinate types between the three clear-cut types which dominate history. Thibet, Indo-China, and Malaysia have acted as filters between India and China. Japan has thrown disparate influences into the same crucible with national elements: the result is a synthetic product, a diminished image of the entire East. Central Asia was

the cross-roads by which the Eur-Asiatic populations unceasingly met and passed. Intermediaries between West and East have never been lacking : it would appear to have been the vocation of the Semites, Babylonians, Arabs, and Hebrews, to intercept or open communications between the Mediterranean world and the world which begins at the Indus. We shall need to place both in time and space such compromises as were supplied by Egyptian Hellenism, Syrian Gnosticism, Arab and Jewish Thought—these Asiatic off-shoots of Western thought. We must not forget the primarily Aryan—that is to say, Indo-Iranian—character of our folklore, nor the eastern origin of the Christian faith, which, like the post-Vedic Indian religions, comes with a doctrine of salvation. Although those centuries of history which we have under consideration do not contain the epoch in which the Assyrians and Babylonians dominated the world, we shall gain nothing by refusing to recognize that an intensive culture perpetuated itself in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates. Persia, in fine, realizes in her thought, her poetry, and in her taste for the sciences, an original conciliation of the purely Aryan spirit, of Hellenism, and finally of Islam. These are the broad lessons which a comparative chronology teaches us. He who would analyse thought must miss the main content of history and of human mentality does he ignore or hold these lessons to be negligible.

To seek the influences manifesting themselves in fact or in logical affinities capable of being disengaged by an

examination of history is to open up an inexhaustible quarry to investigation: such a study would alone merit the title of the history of philosophy, a name which is ordinarily reserved, with no other foundation than the limitations of our view, to a few monographs on Western thinkers. In this chapter we must limit ourselves to a summary examination of the general trend of intellectual evolution in our three series. Superficial as this inquiry must be, it may serve as a preliminary clearing of the ground; and in any case it must precede any essay in the comparative method.

With a view of keeping our exposé within reasonable bounds we shall take for granted a knowledge of the main lines of such speculation as constitutes "our" philosophy—that is to say, the sum of the Græco-Latin, mediaeval and modern European theories. For us it will be but a portion of philosophy as such, that is, of universal thought, but still the portion to which we shall have to refer as the point of comparison in function of which, though of differing type, we shall seek to understand the rest. Our greater insistence on Oriental doctrines in no way signifies that we hold them in preference, but simply that we have to compensate for the insufficient knowledge of even the most cultured Western reader in this connexion by developing these more fully. Thus we shall seek first to examine in what degree the general frame of European thought, chronologically envisaged, appears to be applicable either to Indian or Chinese thought.

In using, as we have done hitherto, the expression "evolution" to designate the successive transformations

of the various forms of thought, we have in no wise given our adhesion to an ill-advised assimilation of thought, pursued through many generations, to the life of an organism which proceeds by certain vicissitudes from its formation to the adult state, and thence to decrepitude and death. We do not know if or when the thought of each of the types of humanity under consideration will come to an end ; we do not know if or when it began to be active. But we are aware, in the course of the three thousand years which fill history, of the rapid building up, in these three domains, of systems whose bases were first laid, then their scaffolding erected and the actual building completed ; thenceforward the formula, once found, is repeated and adventitious details added, much as a facade is embellished by ornamentation ; finally invention wears itself out, and, unless the style is renovated, building not only ceases but the edifice is no longer kept in repair and becomes undermined by the processes of its own decay no less than by outward circumstances. This banality is not less true of the East than of the West, but the manner in which it is true here and true there, in proportion as we understand it better, can teach us much both of ourselves and of others.

More than one Sinologue has been astonished to discover in ancient China, between the sixth and thirteenth centuries, "literati errant" who had been tossed back and forth from one princely court to another by the confused and capricious nature of political happenings, whom the desire for money had induced to sell themselves to the highest bidder, and whose subtlety of mind had rendered capable of reducing no matter whom to silence, or of persuading men by turns

of the pro and contra. King Siuen, of Ts'i (342-324), maintained seventy-two of these literary men whose talents he employed. Elsewhere a celebrated Buddhist text pictures for us, in the heart of Indo-Grecian Bactria and at the end of the second century B.C., the potentate of that country holding debate with a similar personage whose captious argument surprised and amused him. Irony of Fate! The king is a Greek, Menander, and the sophist—since sophist he is—is a pure Indian, Nāgasena. A little further information reveals to us that this man, far from being an exception among his surroundings—far from it being possible to regard him, therefore, as an exotic reflection of a Protagoras or Gorgias—reasons in precisely the same manner as those innumerable unknown men who, by their biting criticism of the Vedas, prepared the way for Buddhism, or who gave to this new doctrine its agnostic foundation. The sophist is at least as supreme throughout Chinese and Indian antiquity as in Hellas in the times of Pericles; in each of these milieux the unstable political conditions and the disorganization of the old order favoured the multiplication of unscrupulous adventurers, free from all conviction save that of the relativity of any convictions and of the supremacy of reason.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot, henceforward, hold sophism to be an accident

<sup>1</sup> We have made a study of this ferment of ideas in an article entitled: "La sophistique" (*Revue de Met. et de Mor.*, xxiii, No. 2, 1917, pp. 343-62). We have also published a French edition of the Chinese sophist, Yin Wen-tse (in *T'oung pao*, 2nd series, xv, No. 5, December, 1914, p. 68), who had not before been translated into any European language. Translations of other Chinese sophists, notably of Kuei Ku Tzū and of Kung-sun Lung Tzū, will appear shortly.



of Greek history. We do not, however, claim that a comparable ferment of ideas conditions all intellectual evolution. To reduce history to the fortuitous, or to see in it the application of so-called laws, is equally to sin against positivity. But to note a similar sophistical period coming at the beginning of all three philosophical traditions, in our opinion, is to note a fact of tremendous import. It implies, for instance, that thought does not operate freely until, by systematic negation, it has made a clean sweep of traditional beliefs ; that its discursive function prepares its constructive aptitude, and that the controversial eristic exploitation of the resources of language precludes the formation of abstract concepts.

The differences distinguishing these three sophisms can here be passed over in silence. Suffice it to remark that Greek sophism came to an end very quickly, having found in Plato and Aristotle—thanks to the turn of mind of Socrates, equally captivated by argument and truth—the pioneers of a system so puissant that we are still obsessed by its prestige. Confucius had faith in the value of reasoning, but his respect for tradition distinguishes him from the sophists of his day ; in measure as he extricated the moral consciousness of his contemporaries from anarchy he contributed to the destruction of the sophists : did he not have one of them, at least, executed as subversive of and dangerous to the safety of the realm ? On the other hand, his agnosticism, his dialectical adroitness, his punctiliousness in detail—were all favourable to casuistry and perpetuated the very spirit against which he reacted. Chuang Tzū had to construct a grandiose theoretical philosophy on a

basis not less relativist than that of the "knights errant of the pen" for Chinese sophism to lose all *raison d'être* other than the matching of the master moralist against the master metaphysician. In India the inspiration of Nāgasena extends to the independent schools of Tīrthikas, the Cārvākas materialists, and the Buddhists of the Lesser Vehicle; with the Mādhyamikas it prolonged itself in a negative metaphysics—an ontological transposition of the primitive eristics—and even in the spiritualism of the Yogacārās; briefly, it endures under different forms for as long as Buddhism is neither expelled nor assimilated.

It was a grandiose metaphysics that was built up on the foundation of sophism. Born of dialectics, at bottom it remained dialectics despite its application to being equally with thought. It is not to be wondered at that it believed itself to have arrived at maturity by the acquisition of that kind of verbal precision which finds its expression in the logic of concepts. From the moment Greek thought systematized itself the foundations of logic were laid, canons of truth were established for good and all, and the first methodical expression of a universal science had already become the final form of a certain mode of thought: Aristotle, the complete Hellene, is the first incarnation and the constant inspiration of scholasticism. The *ne varietur* organization of thought was longer in the seeking in the East but only to be the more surely found in the end. The long story which resulted in the crystallization of the refractory elements of Chinese reflexion around Confucian moralism only achieves its complete triumph under the Sung dynasty in the twelfth century, when a quite new

Confucianism becomes reconciled in a syncretic classicism with Taoist principles and Indian inspiration. In India, towards the first centuries of our era, each philosophic tradition experiences the desire to stabilize itself in formulæ as strict and laconic as possible: this anxiety for verbal perfection in a language itself held to be the perfect language ("Sanskrit") showed itself so compelling that often the commentary appeared contemporaneously with the "sūtra", or was even penned by the same writer.

Scholasticism is thus no more than sophism a European happening, but a more or less general fact. Everywhere that a doctrine is ripe for scholastic teaching and has arrived at formal precision, everywhere that the pedagogics of orthodoxy are determined by methods held to be exhaustive, and everywhere that truth has to be extracted from a text explained by commentaries, there we see the inception of scholasticism.<sup>1</sup> Christian scholasticism, which culminated in St. Thomas, is accompanied by two satellites, Jewish and Arabian, of whom Maimonides and Ibn Raschid were the most completely representative. There is a Buddhist scholasticism—that of Buddhaghosa; and a Brahmanic—that of Çankara. Chinese classicism is scholasticism par excellence. Every doctrine, even recent, which takes upon itself the likeness of a complete system or a demonstrated truth rather than a truth in the making, bears a scholastic character. Witness the Neoplatonism of Proclus, Stoicism, even Cicero's New Academy, the dogma of the Early Fathers, and the Leibnitzianism of Wolff. The encyclopedias are scholastic works par

<sup>1</sup> Masson-Oursel, "La Scolastique," *Revue philos.*, xc, 1920, pp. 123-41.

excellence, and so is that epic, the *Mahābhārata*, equally with our *Encyclopædia* of the eighteenth century, that engine of war against tradition; so, too, the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas equally with the formidable compilations which fill the libraries of Sinology. These huge works proceed from a need for organization and unification.

Thus in all three civilizations scholasticism succeeded a phase in which intellectual activity was the apanage of one or of many generations of sophists. In Greece the two periods are separated only by the genial personality of Plato in whom the Hellenic spirit arrived at its richest floraison, a link between Socrates, the last and greatest of the sophists, and Aristotle, the greatest of the scholastics. In India the two phases run into one another: Buddhist dogmatism, the work of the true sophists, becomes from its inception an integral part of a canon of scholastic structure. China remains sophist until the introduction of Buddhism: the almost Socratic guise of Confucius' teaching, the manner in which the debates of the Taoists, Lao, Li, and Chuang are carried on, testify, despite the amplitude of their thought, to that mixture of agnosticism and bitter-controversialism by which the sophists may be recognized in all latitudes. The passage from one phase to the other expresses itself as the substitution for a disordered effervescence, rich in new ideas but either innocent of or the negation of all discipline, of an intellectual order conscious alike of its end and of its means, armed against every innovation and determined to maintain itself in that stability which is the dream of all perfect achievement.

During the first the mind feels its way and exercises

itself in adventure without having any notion of its own processes ; in the second, it is ignorant neither of the amplitude of its domain nor of the variety of its resources ; it realizes complete knowledge and therefore a knowledge that allows of no development. Proceeding thus from anarchy to discipline it renounces its blundering but fertile activity for methodical but sterile action. Having surmounted—or pushed aside—the obstacles to its realization, it forms itself in completed doctrine, but fades even while it blooms, the victim of perfection achieved—annihilated by the very act of triumphing.

The character of those initial and terminal phases is opposed at every point. Sophism witnesses to a perspicacity to seize the pro and contra, inclines often to scepticism and always to criticism. Scholasticism, having its throne established, reposes in a certainty that no doubt can shake and which creates either a school or a church. Sophism attempts difficult and incoherent inductions, furtive presentments of great truths, outrageous negations, and impudent paradoxes. Scholasticism contents itself with patient deductions, timid because they progress step by step, without risk of losing their way so clearly do they know where they are going ; yet audacious, too, because they claim to embrace the whole of reality.

These two phases are yet linked by a close connexion. Each is garbed in a formal character, since each defines itself in terms of method, independently of the objects envisaged or even of the thought expressed. Both witness to the conviction that knowledge is an affair of language, residing in the word in the first and in the second in instruction.

Although dogmatic pedantry appears to be poles apart from critical improvization, the lesson completes the plea, the professor finishes what the advocate has begun, being himself desirous if not of indoctrinating at least of moulding and of winning other minds.

If the sophists are pioneers, the scholasticists are those who achieve completion: a perilous glory, for thought that lives on itself without being renewed risks death from inanition in measure as the system in which it is enclosed is well adjusted: the system seals thought hermetically from contact with the rest of the world. To the carping cynicism of the sophist is opposed the pedantic conceit of the scholasticist. The antithesis would thus appear to be complete. Yet these two men are masters, both alike devoting themselves to teaching and it is the same thought that is transmitted from one to the other and transformed in the transmitting. This truth of universal value, which sophism sought with small confidence that it could be found, scholasticism, imagining it to have been discovered, strains every nerve to demonstrate even to the final consequence; if scholasticism feeds on formalism it is because sophism has inaugurated only a formal dialectic—further, just as the rock against which sophism was wrecked consisted in the fact that it produced a rhetoric only, the danger to which the other is exposed lies in the possibility of foundering in an ocean of verbalism. Both, in effect, take the expression of thought, that is to say, language—for the basis of their speculation: is it to be wondered at that both remain prisoned within language?

This captivity has never ceased to circumscribe Chinese

and Indian thought. Europe's chief originality is in that she escaped from it by breaking with scholasticism. A slow and painful rupture, albeit the thinkers of the sixteenth century desired it to be brusque and decisive. The new men, Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant are linked to scholasticism in the closest possible fashion ; the Reformation creates for itself a formal orthodoxy ; the founder of positivism claims to bring into science and society an order traced on the lines of that prevailing in Catholicism. Nevertheless, the hold of scholasticism weakens with the centuries. The spirit of the Renaissance gave it its death-wound.

Over and over again this movement has been defined as a return alike to the ideas and the tastes of antiquity. Without in any way denying that such an interpretation may be supported by an abundance of facts, it suffices, for a demonstration of its insufficiency, that we should remember that the protagonists of the new spirit were physicists rather than historians or linguists. Furthermore, this obsession of antiquity, which never ceased to haunt Indian and Chinese thought alike, in no way delivered this thought from its scholastic fetters. Neither would it seem more in accordance with fact to seek the decisive character of modern mentality in its direct examination of nature. Many a *περὶ φύσεως* or a *de Natura* was penned long before the sixteenth century<sup>1</sup> The alchemist was as much an experimenter as the laboratory expert of to-day. Taoist philosophy, for all that it preached the cult of nature, never renewed Chinese mentality, whose most venerable inspiration it actually expressed ; such alchemist researches

as it gave rise to appear to be of exactly the same order as those of our Middle Ages. We can recognize in the spirit of the Renaissance with better title an individualist will which rebels against the authority of the Book or of the Master; the Reformation, which trusts, in religious matters, to the individual reason, and the mathematical physics of a Vinci or a Galileo, which abandons the works of Aristotle along with the decisions of Councils, protest with equal vehemence against all discipline imposed on reason from without.

That which exorcised for us the prestige of scholasticism and whose absence, in Asiatic civilization, rendered men incapable of ridding themselves of that prestige, was the coming of the critical spirit. The return to antiquity only gave new life to speculation in so far as a better knowledge of history permitted the placing of Christian science and Christian society on a plane with a pagan science possessing ideas not less justifiable than the ideas of Christianity. Hindus and Chinese, on the contrary, hypnotizing themselves with the contemplation of an entirely fictitious golden age, consumed themselves in sterile regrets. The return to nature only suggested hitherto untried methods in so far as thought, learning to beware of itself, went back to school to study things in themselves in order that it might thus investigate their laws: because they never made this confession of ignorance, India and China, even in exalting nature, could never shake the vain prestige of their science with its claim to perfection. Modern Europe became aware that science cannot be the work of the schools; it is not a question of demonstrating formal truth but of



promoting research ; two sources of information alone exist—nature itself and history.

Summary though it has been, this interlocutory examination which we have undertaken into the content of philosophical evolution in the civilizations of Europe, India, and China, has introduced us to the use of the comparative method. It has shown us that the employment of analogy, such as we have defined it, is neither arbitrary nor fallacious ; and that without minimizing the specificity of facts it is permissible to formulate judgments of the following order : Confucius played in China a rôle comparable with that which Socrates filled in Greek thought ; Buddhaghosa rendered to Buddhism the same service that St Thomas did to Christian faith. Facts which we had supposed belonged only to Europe have been recognized to be endowed with a certain generality ; by comparison we are able to sort out that which the different sophisms and scholasticisms have in common from that which is particular to each : our interpretation of these facts, even in so far as concerns Europe, is thereby modified. On the other hand, this renewal we call the Renaissance stands out as an event proper to ~~our~~ western civilization alone. The comparative method would appear to be valid since it extends, defines, transforms, and revises our knowledge

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## CHAPTER II

### SECOND EXAMPLE . COMPARATIVE LOGIC

We shall attempt several applications of the comparative method whose general framework was built up in the foregoing chapter. That which we shall now attempt becomes the more attractive, in several ways, as a result of our previous study. We recognized, in effect, that the intellectual cultures envisaged were dialectics in principle and aim: each one possessed its logic. Setting aside the data furnished by chronology, the logical element of thought is that which is always best apprehended objectively; thus it will be of interest to show that comparative logic is as fully justified as comparative chronology. Finally, to keep within the confines of the problem of the specificity of Greek, Indian, and Chinese logic, we shall find in it a simple and easily isolable example enabling us to test how far the idea of similitude facilitates comprehension of the unlike

In all three environments logic will appear to be part and parcel of sophism, though in very different fashion. In Greece there were physicists who found the nature of things wonderful before ever there were dialecticians who negatived truth; Socrates only triumphed over the sophist by establishing in the order of concepts that which the physicists believed they had recognized in the objective

world—characterization, constitution, permanency. In spite of the contradictions of the physicists, the existence of a system of physics provided a prototype for the analysis of common-sense concepts reflected in language; hence Greek thought appeared from the beginning as the *θεωρία* of objective order. It is generally admitted that Plato conceived his ideas as intelligible elements comparable with those material elements, the atoms of Democritus: like atoms, ideas presented a reconciliation between becoming and fixity, between Heraclitus and the Elatic school. We shall observe this affinity between atomism and logic in other surroundings. India, on whom the contemplation of phenomenal nature had little hold, drew inspiration for her logic from a quite different source. The exegesis of the Vedas has given place to *Mīmāṃsā*, a technique of interpretation of the religious texts, and on to this technique there was early grafted a lively philological curiosity which flowered in the grammatical treatises of Pāṇini (towards 350 B.C.), Kātyāyana and Patañjali (second century B.C.). Thus was preparation made, through a strict analysis of the forms of language, for the analysis of the processes of thought: the germ of a classification of categories and a theory of sophism was apparent in the earliest of these writers. In complete contrast with Greece, the Hindu mind found in the examination of the resources of language both a subject permitting certain and rigorous knowledge and an opportunity for cunningly exploiting its artifices: for the Hindu a moral science rather than a physical science was the first. These two points of view are never placed in opposition by the Chinese mind, which

considers man to be a cosmic force, and the universe dependent on human action. The *Yi-king*, which is of great antiquity apart from its Confucian and post-Confucian appendices, bears witness to the belief that natural forces and ideal essences are but a single reality translated into two different languages. Complex ideas are built up of simple ideas, much as trigrams by association become hexagrams, according to the rules of a kind of universal mathematics.

Thus in both cases there dawned a conviction, at a very early date, that concepts permitted of a certain degree of objectivity. Sophism corresponds to the discovery that this order supposes relativity. Everywhere an escape from the uncertainty and confusion which appeared to some to result from this relativism is effected by the indication of precise but not arbitrary relations between one idea and another. Socrates recognized that because current opinion distinguishes between a fisherman who fishes with a rod and fishermen who catch fish by other methods, a definite character differentiates this kind of fishing from all others: no amount of quibbling by a sophist will be effective against this commonsense *datum*. Confucius inherits from the *Yi-king* the conviction that the names of things strictly translate their nature and therefore that by knowing the correct names or by using them correctly adequate mental ideas are formed. Thus is refuted in advance the allegation of Li and Chuang who, under pretext that the original tao is above contradiction, were to admit the equivalence of inconsistencies. The most ancient Buddhist thought holds that individuality,



otherwise fallacious, but existing by virtue of fact, is constituted by the name and the form (*nāmarūpa*). The phenomena (*dharma*s) thus justified institute a stable order, at first thought of as the sacrosanct ordonnance of sacrificial operations—since the world, according to Brahmanism, is nothing else but a sacrifice—then dependent, almost in Chinese fashion, on the action of temporal sovereigns, and finally founded on the omnipotent and omniscient mansuetude of those guides or saviours, the Buddhas and sectary gods.<sup>1</sup>

This order presents itself in Greece as a participation between ideas ; in China as a hierarchy of values ; in India as a classification of realities. We must take these words here in their strict sense ; as such they define different points of view. Assuredly the Platonic participation implies a hierarchy, therefore a classification of essences, but in Greece only the hierarchic subsumption appears as a *μῆξις ἐξ ὧν*. In China logic scarcely disengages itself from its model, the social order : the qualities of the mind, rectitude and sincerity, reflect these moral virtues—conformism or justice, and respect for distinctions. In India classification is the constant schema of intelligibility, but it is completed by the principle of analogy. From the earliest *Upaniṣads* the symmetrical classes in virtue of which X is to Y as A is to B institute a network of correspondences : the varieties of sacrifice, the elements, the different sensation data, the operations of thought, caste, the cardinal points, the bodily functions, divinities, metrical

<sup>1</sup> " Note sur l'acception, à travers la civilisation indienne, du mot ' dharma ', " Masson-Oursel, *Journal Asiatique*, xix, 2, April-June, 1922, pp. 269-75.

forms, and many others besides dispose themselves in this way in the same "Weltanschauung"

Such are the bases on which a theory of reasoning is built up in the three civilizations. Socrates having discovered concepts, Plato thought out the conditions of their agency in judgment and Aristotle permanently stabilized, so to speak, the rules of combination of judgment in valid reasoning. The rapidity and the sureness of this progress is one of the aspects of the "Greek miracle". But this simplistic interpretation does not account for the whole reality. Reasoning, as the sophists understood it, had already been the occasion for the need felt by Socrates to circumscribe the meaning of concepts, and for Plato to discover the affinity of certain ideas and the incompatibility of certain others. Even though the technique of reasoning be the achievement of Greek logic, it owed its formation to the practice of reasoning.

Indian thought began its logical investigations by conceiving of a very special reasoning whose examples are to be met with in the *Upaniṣads*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the famous argument on which the Buddhist dogmatic reposes—the *pratītya samutpāda* or theory of the conditioned production of phenomena<sup>1</sup>. Let us turn to this reasoning, whose formal structure is no less remarkable than its

<sup>1</sup> Masson-Oursel, "Essai d'interprétation de la théorie bouddhique des douze conditions," *Revue de l'Hist. des Rel.*, lxxii, 1-2, January, 1915. Arguments of this sort have been noted in my "Esquisse d'une théorie comparée du sorite," *Revue de Mét. et de Mor.*, xxx, 6, November, 1912, pp. 815-17. See also my *Esquisse d'une histoire de la philosophie indienne*, Paris, Geuthner, 1923.

doctrinal content, and the knowledge of which caused the Sage of the Çākyas (Çākyamuni) to become the Illuminated One, the Buddha. It links together two extreme terms, poverty and unenlightenment, by ten mean terms which lead from one to the other. The transition is effected by a regression of the conditioned to the condition, from the datum of the fact of poverty right back to where no previous condition can be supposed—ignorance. These terms, which are regulated in a fixed order according to an essential connexion, are manners of being or of doing either as regards the world or ourselves; they are graded from the present state of our concrete personality to the supreme state of all phenomena. This type of logical relation, this linked succession of states (*nidānas*) is to be met with in the thought of the six centuries which preceded our era. It translates into a discursive order the closely dovetailed principles constituting the ontology of that ancient philosophy, the Sāṃkhya.

A very similar reasoning marks the beginnings of Chinese logic (*loc. cit* 811-14), such as it was sought in the primitive Confucian school and in Mencius. The *Ta-hio* is made up almost exclusively of three arguments of this type. The following is the most notable: "The ancients (kings) who wished to cause brilliant virtues to shine in the universe first governed their own (country). Wishing to govern the country, they first made order to reign in the home. Wishing to make order reign in the home, they first cultivated their own selves. Wishing to cultivate self, they first corrected the heart. Wishing to correct the heart, they first rendered their thoughts sincere. Wishing to render their thoughts

sincere, they first endeavoured to increase their knowledge. To endeavour to increase one's knowledge is to comprehend the nature of things." Here we are certainly dealing with a regression from one condition to another till the unconditioned is reached ; in other instances we observe a contrary progress from a first condition to derivative conditions. This method of reasoning corresponds to the same state of mind as the firm resolve to employ names only with full knowledge and in their correct acceptation. Reality is right and proper (" *comme il faut* ") when it conforms to the names it bears ; names, right by nature, unless we prostitute them, express the things themselves. The validity of reasoning depends on the right use of words and coincides with its objective value.

Arrived at this stage, neither Indian nor Chinese thought have yet done with sophism. We have already seen that the intellectual movement thus called lasted longer in the East than in the West, that is, if we do not include with the Greek sophists their successors, the Neo-Academicians and the Sceptics. The entire hīnayānistic canon is borne on the back of agnostic and disputatious sophism, and in the later Mahāyāna the negative argumentation of the sceptic sophists is found again. In the same way, in the Far East, the incompatibility of the moral traditionalism of the Confucians with the naturalistic mysticism of the Taoists, far from bringing an end to sophism, provides it with fresh themes. In both these environments the sophists of the second period, whether post-Buddhists or post-Confucianists, give precision to their dialectic in the form of critical judgment.

Nothing is more surprising than to note in Kung-sun Lung the argument of the Cynics that one can assert but not really maintain that the horse is white : the horse is a horse, and white is white. The Chinamen says in the same sense : " A white horse is not a horse." Yin Wen had already remarked that one said : a good ox (*un bon bœuf*), a good horse (*un bon cheval*), a good man (*un homme bon*), and found therein all the more difficulty in that for him confusion of names, source of all evil, is the supreme falsity. Qualification of the substantive by the adjective or the attribution of a predicate to a subject—these equivalent operations, still less distinct one from the other in the Chinese language than in our Indo-European idiom, come up against the same impossibility of this fusion of the identical and the other, over which elsewhere the Platonic participation had triumphed. Yin Wen's solution was to declare that " the applicableness of a general designation to any determined corporeal form is without limit " ; that in any case, in the examples enumerated " the applicableness of the term Good meets with no obstacle". Kung-Sun Lung seeks a "*succès de scandale*" by his paradoxes which, after the fashion of Zeno of Elea, put their finger on the illogicalness of Becoming. His sentences, worthy of a futurist, shock that need for identity which commonsense feels in every latitude, because they bluntly set out the complexity of all existence : " the carpenter's set-square is not a set-square. The eyes do not see. Fire is not warm. An egg has feathers. A young dog is not a dog. A stone that is hard and white is two (stones)," etc. Huei, that sophist of the preceding generation, himself did not maintain less

sharply the unreality of space and time, and the vanity of all measurement. "The sky is as low as the earth. Inasmuch as a being is born it dies. The South both has and has not a boundary. I go to Yue to-day and I arrived there yesterday."

A work of the same kind, undertaken by the Buddhist sophists, divines what should be read between the lines of the *Milinda Pañha* or the *Kathāvatthu*. In the first of these canonical works the dialectician Nāgasena shows that the name applied to an object can neither stand for the parts without the whole nor the whole without the parts (II, 1). Instead of seeing in the argument of the twelve *nidānas* access to the unconditioned, he interprets it as an unending series having the kind of indefinite alternation to be observed in the seed and the plant, the egg and the chicken. The important thing is that the mind knows not how to get a hold. Here the possibility of judgment is compromised by the inconsistency of the terms which that judgment has to relate, whereas in China it was respect for the specificity of terms which authorized nothing but tautology. But the same deceptive consequence follows from it. Far from arriving at a doctrine of reasoning, as it made an effort to do, the mind is stopped short by scruples as to the possibility of even making a judgment.

Foiled in its attempts to justify to itself its own procedure, the mind gives up introspection and becomes absorbed in the real. Such will appear to us the meaning of the realist doctrines which come to birth during the

three centuries preceding the Christian era. These doctrines are substantialist and seek in this special ontology a solution of the problems of right judgment. What, in effect, is substance if not a virtual support for the predicate, a subject to be determined by the qualities inherent in its structure, the actual being of the copula, ready to give precision to its unity by multiple attributes—not attributes as attributes, but the particular attributes which its nature embraces?

In contrast to Buddhism, the Jains bear witness to a naive faith in objectivity. Things and the soul are not alone substantial: space, time, virtue and vice, and action are all substantial or else suppose substance. Qualities perceived are entities; knowing is produced like any physical event; action is a becoming entangled in a Karmic entity. The multiplicity of existence in no way results from the multiplicity of points of view; it is effective, each being possessing a diversity of facets and aspects. During the early centuries of our era an original logic was developed from this idea, namely that the complexity of a being permitted of two contrary assertions both being true at one and the same time (*anekānta*). Thus the arguments which the Buddhists turned to account and which idealists of every age turn to account in favour of the subjectivity of relation, become integrated in gross dogmatism.

This is where the influence of atomism on the formation of logical ideas intervenes. The Jains admit atoms, but not the atoms of Democritus; theirs are dowered with savour, colour, odour, two kinds of tangibility and, finally,

are the cause of sonority. The Vaiṣeṣika, a very ancient Brahmanic system of physics, which a somewhat suspect tradition connects with Jainism, likewise gives its blessing to an atomistic exegesis. It acknowledges that these corpuscles have no relation with sound; instead of recognizing similarity in all of them, it attributes to them one, two, three, or four perceptible qualities according as to whether they are of air, fire, water, or earth. In the same way, in certain Buddhist schools, the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas, ranking among the earliest, earth is composed of rugose, water of viscuous, fire of hot, and wind of unstable elements. We knew from Epicurus and Lucretius that atomism did not necessarily exclude a qualitative physics: India confirms it, in her eyes, since attributes have to fit the substances, these substances, were they atoms, would possess the same predicates as if composite—in other words, they also would possess perceptible qualities. It is the inverse Democritic claim to interpret the quality so far as possible by the pure quantity which scandalizes Hindu realism. Let us recognize that this realism supplied a solution of an empirical kind to the problem of judgment, namely, that those affirmations are true which predicate of a subject the attribute which belongs to it by its nature.

The Vaiṣeṣika realism inspires a theory of categories (*padārtha*), the enumeration of the six irreducible modalities of being, namely substance, quality, action, generality, particularity, and inherence. The first three date from the primitive stock-in-trade of Indian thought. The other three are the result of reflection on the idea of category itself:



the conformity of two essences of the same group (*samānya*) ; their content in so far as characteristic (*viśeṣa*) ; and the belonging to a substance of its properties (*samavāya*). This classing of abstractions is comprehensible only as having issued from reflection on language : the first three represent the substantive, adjective, and verb, and the others represent points of view on these grammatical forms. The very term *padārtha*—"meaning of words"—shows what we have to deal with and distinguishes this idea from the Aristotelian category which is a modality of affirmation (*κατηγορεῖν*, of which the proper acceptation is—to accuse). Another important classification distinguishes, among different kinds of connexions, over and above the inherence already indicated, the causal relation, the external and fortuitous contact (for instance, that of the vase on the table), and, finally, the mutual opposition. The theory of the *pramāṇas*, which was to propagate itself more or less widely in Indian thought as a whole, appears to be part and parcel of these two classifications. The difficulty usually experienced by Orientalists who have to translate this word—as always in such an occurrence—is to indicate an idea having no complete analogy with our own ideas. The original meaning is measure, in the acceptation of *μέτρον καὶ κανὼν* ; as much as to say the perfect type which fixes the norm in any given case. This meaning had been preserved in the æsthetic treatises, where the word designates correctness of proportion both in anatomy and perspective, that is to say, conformity to forms or rules prescribed for the artist by his traditions. The philosophic acceptation, on all fours with this, is correct

knowledge ; it has only become by derivation knowledge *tout court* on one side, and correctness on the other, that is to say a criterion of validity (of knowledge of a thing), the instrument of proof. It is less a faculty of knowing than the exact mode of each sort of knowledge. And, just as the æsthetic ideal, far from extracting every fact from experience, is relatively *a priori*, so is knowledge-type ideal rather than real. Such will be the character of Indian theories of knowledge—a determination of knowledge-types rather than a psychology or a criticism of the empirical mind. The Vaiṣeṣika inaugurates these researches in maintaining that there thus exist two sorts of valid knowledge—perception and inference. Inference (*anumāna*—the *Vaiṣeṣika-sūtras* say *laingikam*, IX, 2, i) is founded on the different varieties of relation, for instance—from cause to effect or inversely, etc—so many different ways in which an object can be the sign (*linga*) of another. In the relation of sign to thing signified, applicable to every connexion between two terms, and more abstract than the earlier conceived relation between condition and conditioned, Brahmanic India finds the definitive frame within which its subsequent logical speculation takes place.

The specificity of the various forms of being is also expressed by the basis of Chinese thought, in which realism is dominant. There are at least social distinctions which the Celestials do not practically call in question ; still, politic and cosmology are not disassociated, since the same expression (*t'ien hia*) designates both the world and empire and since sage and prince (*kiun tzū*) are equivalent—a sage having the right to govern and a prince having to

be wise. False logic is but an aspect of social anarchy or of natural disorder. It can be conjured by a critical effort that is at one and the same time grammatical, dialectical, moral, administrative and political, destined, as we have seen, to define the names of things according to the functions which ought to belong to them, and by acting in such wise that beings adopt the conduct prescribed by their names.

Mo Tzū from the fifth, and from the fourth century his disciples—against whom the paradoxes of Huei and Kung-sun Lung are aimed—have attempted to infuse a realist spirit into the ancient nominalism. Rebelling against the formal casuistry of Confucius, they claim that the truth of a thesis is proved by its results more than by the employ of rigorous terms. These pragmatists consider that things exist as a function of archetypes (fa., XXXII, 70), models on which all realization is regulated. Subject and attribute fit because there is no other legitimate predicate than that which, modelled on the subject, is a tracing from and an imitation of it. Nevertheless, despite this pragmatism, the value of names still rests on the nature of things: "that by which something is affirmed is the name (ming); that of which something is affirmed is the substance" (chu) (XXXIV, 81). It is equally fallacious, Hsün Tzū declares, to consider substances as the cause of the confusion of names, and to employ names in such a manner as to confuse substances: names were arbitrarily fixed, but they became correct since the sages of antiquity, "seeing" their convenience, assigned them to objects. "When we hear a word we think of

a substance" (xxii). Elsewhere the Taoist influence transforms the old nominalist theme: Yin Wen, presaging thirteen centuries before the event Sung metaphysics, defines all existence by the possession of a name, but affirms that the name of every object derives from an ineffable origin—the great Way.

In the period following, the Indian mind was to elaborate a theory of reasoning. We should remember that the factors which together produced this result were themselves of varied origin: the philosophical investigation of ancient Brahmanism which had been at first applied to the analysis of the *ātman*, *ānvīkṣikī*; the dialectic of causality, chiefly promoted by the Buddhists—*hetuśāstra*; thought with its controlling power, one of the "members" of the primitive Yoga—*tarka*; the exegesis that fixes in a maxim the precise meaning content of a text—*nyāya*, a term primitively synonymous with *mīmāṃsā*.

The Jain doctrine of inherence, such as it is found in the *Daṣṭavaiikālikaniryukti*, attributed to Bhadrabāhu (towards 300 B.C.) presents a system of reasoning of six members (*avayava*) arranged thus:—

1. Respect for life is the supreme virtue (*pratijñā* or assertion);
2. . . . according to the Jain scriptures (*pratijñā-vibhakti* or specification of the assertion);
3. Because they who respect life are beloved of the gods and because it is meritorious to honour them (*hetu* or reason);

4. They alone who act thus can live in the highest virtue (hetu-vibhakti or specification of the reason) ;

5. But, a man may prosper even when attempting the life of another ; and he may acquire merit even while despising the Jain scriptures : such is the case of the Brahmans (vipakṣa, the contrary or the objection) ;

6. Nay : for they who despise the Jain scriptures cannot be beloved of the gods nor merit that they should be honoured (vipakṣa-pratiṣedha or rebuttal of the objection) ;

7. The Arhats [saints] are fed by the master of the house, because they themselves do not cook their food for fear of killing insects (dṛṣṭānta or example) ;

8. Yet, may not the sin of the master of the house reach also the Arhat for whom the food is cooked ? (aṣanka or scruple) ;

9. Nay, for the Arhat arrives unexpectedly in a house (where he asks an alms) : the cooking of the food was not done on his account (aṣanka-pratiṣedha or rebuttal of the scruple) ;

10. Respect for life is therefore the supreme virtue (naigamṇa, the conclusion or result).

The *Nyāya-sūtras* (end of second or beginning of third century of our era) simplify this long and laborious reasoning ; they reduce it to five propositions :—

1. There is fire on the mountain (pratijñā or assertion) ;

2. Because there is smoke on the mountain (hetu or reason) ;

3. Where there is smoke there is fire : on the hearth, for instance (udāharaṇam or example) ;

4. And it is the same here (in the case of the mountain)  
(upanaya or application to a particular instance) ;

5. Thus so it is (nigamanam or result) (I, i, 32).

Arguments of this kind had already appeared, one in the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhaparvan*, adh. 51, v. 5), another in the *Carakasamhitā* (towards A.D. 78). This latter text follows the positive demonstration (sthāpanā) by a negative or counter demonstration (pratiṣṭhāpanā), establishing the contrary thesis in the same fashion. This, perhaps, is the ultimate essence of sophism as attested by Brahmanic logic.

Buddhism disengaged itself but slowly from the negative dialectic of the sophists, encouraged, as it was, to persist therein by its original agnosticism, to which, in the *Mādhymikas*, succeeded a systematic nihilism. Coming to logic earlier than Brahmanism, and being dialectical through and through, it yet arrived at creating a formal logic later only. The considerable dialectical effort of the authors of the *Prajñā-pāramitās*, of Nāgārjuna and his school, witnesses to no less a degree of speculative scepticism than one finds in Carneades or Pyrrho ; but in the former and in the *Yogācāras* which are added to the *Mādhymikas* it is reconciled with a mysticism comparable with that of the Alexandrians. The thought of Pascal and the attitude of the Fidéists both testify to a similar reconciliation. A spiritualist dogmatics had to be evolved by Asanga and Vasubandhu before their successors, having at last a body of doctrine to establish and defend, could elaborate a dialectic free from controversial intention. We can, in effect, consider the reasoning of the Chinese versions of the

*Upāya-kauṣalya-hrdaya-śāstra* (I, i) attributed to Nāgārjuna, and of the *Yogacāryabhūmi-śāstra* (XV) attributed to Maitreya, to be a close imitation, by means of a simplification which excluded the "application" and the "conclusion" as superfluous, of the Nyāya logic; *a fortiori* the reasoning by two members, a proposition and a reason, which Vasubandhu admitted, according to the testimony of Kuei-ki, confirmed by the *Nyāya-vārttika* (I, 137).

Formal logic only made its appearance in Buddhism with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (fifth and seventh centuries). A final trace of its dialectical origin is betrayed in the opposition of an inference made by oneself—a simple enunciation of the thing inducted, alleged in the reason "there is fire here because there is smoke"—to the inference made with a view of convincing another—a genuine demonstration: "because wherever there is smoke there is fire, therefore there is fire here because there is smoke here." The identity of structure in this second argument with the first figure of the Aristotelian syllogism must be pointed out, but cannot be interpreted in its full significance, as we shall soon see, except in the light of a generalized parallel between Indian and Greek logic.<sup>1</sup> Dharmakīrti's originality consists in his perfectly clear recognition of the logical connexion, henceforward independent of the mention of the "example", that supporting point which had up till then kept formal thinking within the bounds of experience. This connexion

<sup>1</sup> This identity is even more striking in the following altogether exceptional reasoning of Nāgārjuna (first century of our era): "He who deceives is false," the Sublime hath said it: "All Samskāras are deceivers, therefore they are false." (*Mādhyamika-kārikās*, XIII, i).

is not reducible, as in the Naiyāyikas, to a relation of sign to thing signified; it implies an intimate and necessary solidarity, a natural liaison (svabhāva-pratibhandha) between the probative reason (sign or cause, *linga*, *hetu*), the *sādhana*, and the inference proven (thing signified or effect), *sādhya*. The simple concomitance (*sāhacarya*) admitted by the realist systems of Jainism and Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika went more deeply into the identity of nature (*tadātmya*) or causality taken in its analytical meaning, the effect being produced by the cause like the consequence from the principle. Outside these two cases obviously we are unable to find necessary relation but contingent consecution only. Thenceforward Buddhist and Brahmanic logic are opposed (leaving later syncretism out of account) just as in Europe the rationalist logic of Aristotle was opposed to the empirical logic of Mill: for these, universal and necessary law exists, for the others it cannot exist. Dignāga, reflecting on this distinction, and from motives comparable with those of Kantian philosophy, considers that *a priori* synthetic judgment is possible: "there is nothing real indissolubly linked which can be a logical reason, for it is said: the reason according to which a fact is the cause of another fact which is its logical consequence does not depend on external existence or non-existence; it rests on the condition of inherence or of substance established by our thought."<sup>1</sup> Whence the transposition into idealist terms of the vocabulary of the Naiyāyikas, a transposition finally adopted in the eclecticism of the Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika by Brahmanic thought itself.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Vācaspatimiśra in *Nyāyavārtikāṭīkā*, 127, 2, 4.



after Buddhism had been eliminated. Nevertheless, the Naiyāyikas, such as Uddyotakara, faithful to the realist principle of their doctrine, were to refuse to admit this idea of an indissoluble connexion. From this time forward a logic was to be built up destined to reign throughout eastern Asia with as imperial a sovereignty as that which the Aristotelian theory of reasoning enjoyed in the West.

China, as a matter of fact, did not succeed in elaborating a complete logic. She never made a final choice between the Confucians, who believed both in the specificity of things and names, and the Taoists, who held any definition to be ill-founded by comparison with a Tao that was above opposition. Each of these schools bore fruit in a distinct notion of reasoning: the first in unconnected arguments, which present conditions governing each other, as in the passage quoted from the *Ta-hio*; the second in transformations of one concept into another, modelled on the quasi-alchemist transmutation of natural essences, such as the phases of circular evolution admitted by Chuang in which the vital germs (Ki), veritable λόγοι σπερματικοί, are metamorphosed into a variety of kinds, including mankind (XVIII, 6). To the Confucians who preached respect for the principle of non-contradiction, because they enjoined respect for specificity, were opposed the Taoists who professed the equivalence of incompatibles, the production of the same by the other and of the other by the same. Every attempted intermediate solution, whether it emanated from Yin Wen or Mo, Hsün or Han-fei, led

back to one or the other of these opposite attitudes, and at the cost of new difficulties. The act of vandalism of 221 B.C. only imposed a truce on this hesitancy between two irreconcilable points of view: speculation was brought to a standstill following the destruction of books prescribed by a monarch anxious to get rid of the feudal system in order that his dominion might be established over the whole of China.

This facilitated the introduction of Indian logic transported by Buddhism. The capable translators of the sixth and seventh centuries rendered accessible to the Celestials the treatises of the Buddhist idealists, and also those—sometimes at first hand—of the Naiyāyikas or the Vaiśeṣikas which were reflected therein. A certain number of these books were brought in by Hsuan-tsang and translated by doctors trained in his school, such as Kuei-ki (middle of the seventh century). These works, the sole treatises of formal logic which Chinese civilization can show, only give a new version of Indian logic and, for the most part, have nothing whatever to do with the early attempts of native thought. Nothing in any way notable appears to have been added to Buddhist logic as a result of Chinese thinking. Discussions between Buddhist schools, and between partisans of Brahmanic doctrine and Buddhist adepts, lost equally in sharpness of definition and in penetration once they had been transplanted outside India. It is true that while Confucians indulged in bitter polemics against Buddhists, against whose works they brought charges of having introduced foreign superstitions or of having ruined the social order by exalting the monastic life to the detriment

of loyalty to the throne and the cult of the family ; and while Taoists fought the Buddhist religion more cleverly by assimilating it and by modelling their own church on it—those Chinese who had been converted to Buddhism acquired the taste for controversy and sought with the zeal of apologists to discover in the new religion what were claimed to be affinities and concordances with the doctrine of the classics or with that of the Tao.<sup>1</sup> None of these speculative attitudes appear to have promoted any sort of development of the science of exact thinking. Nevertheless, although the formal Indian logic, despite its finished character, did not place Chinese thinkers on lines that led toward the problems of logic, and although, owing to this very character, it profited nothing from its transplantation to the Far East, it is yet evident that the virtual or metaphysical systems of Buddhist logic exercised an influence over the Chinese mind, even when most hostile to foreign doctrine.

This is proved by the wide flights taken by speculation during the second half of the eleventh and in the twelfth century under the Sung dynasty. While Taoism was losing sight of its metaphysical principles in its determination to seek immortality through the medium of alchemy, and to model its hierarchy on the Buddhist organization,

<sup>1</sup> I may mention, as a specimen of such Buddhist apologia that is essentially Chinese, my translation of the *Yuan-jen-louen*, or *Treatise on the Origin of Man*, composed by Tsung-mi, who lived in the first half of the ninth century. See *Journal Asiatique*, March-April, 1915, pp 297-354. The processes of reasoning employed by this writer would merit analysis if we had leisure to sketch out a comparative theory of the arguments brought into play by the various forms of eclecticism.

the thought that issued from meditation on the classics exalted the memory of Confucius to such a pitch as to make him the patron of all wisdom. The erection into the supreme rules for all culture of the works in which he condensed the thought of antiquity, and expounded his own, dates from this epoch. Yet a new spirit is made manifest in the works penned by the philosophers associated with this so-called revival of Confucianism and makes itself felt even in their commentaries on the classics. A metaphysics never dreamed of by Confucius is supposed to lie at the root of his teaching. This nature of things (sing), the law of all being, in which he recognized at the very most a "decree of heaven" (t'ien ming), is now claimed to be its foundation through the infinitely variable combination of two abstract principles, form (li) and matter (k'i), the first being the factor of order and activity, the second the agent, if it may so be expressed, of passivity, disorder and limitation. The whole of reality is thus extended in a vast scale, whose extreme points are the great Supreme (t'ai ki), which by analogy with Greek philosophy one may call the idea of ideas or the pure act, and absolute non-being (t'ai wu). The intermediate degrees of this scale mark the stages of an evolution depicted as a condensation or rarefaction. The following new dogmas bear witness to a genuine syncretism of the principles of metaphysical logic borrowed from heterogeneous systems: the inverse symmetry of the yin and the yang and their alternation, sprung from the old native dualism; the notion of the evolution of a supreme principle, taken from Li Tzū; and the idea of a transformation (hua) that affects all phenomena, which comes from Chuang Tzū;

but also a number of postulates of Buddhist inspiration, such as evolution according to an alternative rhythm of growth and diminution, closely akin to the notion of kalpa or of a "great year"; the conception of continuous liaison between the multiple phases of existence, identical with the Indian belief in transmigration and the reward of works. The blending of these diverse schemes of intelligibility set up a much less strict idea of causal relation than the notion of necessary connexion we find in Dignāga or Dharmakīrti, but Chinese thought believed it had found therein the last word in method just because there were combined in it the diverse influences which induced it.

In the light of our own European logic this rapid sketch of Eastern efforts becomes clear; and, in return, Oriental logic throws light on doctrines with which we are familiar.

The great centres of Asiatic civilization do not show themselves inferior in original effort to the Greek spirit during the five centuries which precede the Christian era: sophism there gave birth to a number of artifices and to many penetrating views on the conditions of true thought, just as it did in the Mediterranean world. But positive systematization was arrived at in India only, and that much later than in Greece, where, from the time of Aristotle, logic, understood, at least, in a certain fashion, became almost mature from the very start. The real Oriental logic was elaborated during the period from the second to the seventh century. It resulted there from a greater variety of factors than those at work in the surroundings

of Plato. In the East no man was found to distil from vulgar opinion and current language that basis of the logical spirit of the West—concepts ; and it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this fact. Socrates, from whom both the school of Plato and the Peripatetic School draw their substance, will thus be revealed to us as the initiator of doctrines having no analogy outside the Mediterranean world ; and so far as the influence of these systems extends, that is to say, right up to our own times, we shall see at work the inspiration of him who believed that we could conceive of the general. In Asia logic did not issue complete from a single mind , at least a thousand years of reflection on grammar, on the interpretative exegesis of rites, and on the causal consecution of phenomena was required, together with the endless rivalry of a number of different philosophic traditions, before a theory of truth was slowly built up. Once this theory had taken shape, however, it became imposed on every school ; its interpretation scarcely varies from one *daršana* to another. In the West, however preponderant the prestige of the Aristotelian *ἀποδείξις* might be, this did not prevent the elaboration of a bitter scepticism, the revival of sophism under the name of the New Academy, nor the institution among the Stoics of a logic of sorites akin in the abstract to the doctrine of the *nidānas* and to the ancient reasoning of the *Ta-huo*, that is to say to a series of conditions each implicated in the other in a definite order. Traces of the Stoic “forces” are to be found in the Alexandrian emanations which present a type of dovetailing irreducible to identity—a procession of hypostases which regulate without being

equivalent to one another, the higher degrees establishing the existence of their own "gradations". Whence the formula of the *Poimandres* (x, 13) :

ὁ νοῦς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ, ὁ λόγος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι, τὸ πνεῦμα ἐν τῷ σώματι.

Greek thought thus came to bestow a value on such forms of argument as resembled a chain of hypothetical judgments, comparable with those which marked the early halting steps of various phases of Oriental thought ; and these last did not until the very end arrive at a systematic doctrine worthy of being set side by side with the method of Aristotle.

Such a parallel has been attempted by Orientalists, even by Orientals ; but the philosophers of the West have not yet even envisaged, much less discussed it. Yet they have an interest at the board because this is not one of those problems belonging exclusively to history. This would be so were Indian logic a reflection only of Greek ; and it is true that its tardy character together with the existence for some two centuries at least of an Indo-Greek culture in Bactria and on the Indus, not to mention the penetration of certain methods of the Stagirite to Bagdad and to a Persian milieu so close to India, do lend plausibility to such an hypothesis. It is legitimate to suppose that Western formulæ have fecundated the logical aspirations of the East, just as the forms of Alexandrian and Syrio-Roman art were not only propagated in Gandhāra, but a certain Apollo-like type of Buddha, hitherto figured by symbols but not as a human effigy, even reached Japan.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, no

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the works of A. Foucher, quoted in the Bibliography of Comparative Chronology, on p. 115. As regards Aristotle's influence, cf. the well

single fact testifies to a genuine influence of any importance. On the contrary, the assimilation to Aristotle's syllogism of the reasoning whose principle was codified by the Nyāya and the Yogācāras will be provocative of nothing but misunderstandings of both.

In fact, there is a considerable temptation to discover in inference "for oneself" induction—the passage of fact into law; and in inference "for others" deduction—the instrument of demonstration; in the object, the minor term; in the sādhyā the major, and in the hetu, the middle. But in that case one would merely be travestying Indian reasoning by making it masquerade in a Greek dress, in some such fashion as this: "All that smokes is igneous; therefore, as this mountain smokes, it is igneous." For Aristotle's syllogism supposes different terms of extension, subsuming the one in the others: mortal > man > Socrates, whereas it is not possible, without descending to absurdity, to affirm here: igneous things > smoking things > mountain. The smoke is no more determined than the fire, nor the mountain than the smoke. Smoke is neither a kind relatively to a pseudo-manner, "fire," nor to the individual—"this mountain." There is simply one thing, the substratum of two qualities, of which one is proven, and the other the instrument of proof. The first is the sādhyā or logical consequence; the second the hetu or convincing reason, or the linga, the sign. We do not deny that India came

documented but somewhat adventurous work of Vidyābhūṣana, listed on p. 150. Niebuhr has already enunciated the hypothesis of a Greek influence on Indian logic in his *Vorlesungen über die alte Geschichte*, iii (cf. Max Muller, *Zeitsch. d. deut. morgenl. Gesellsch.*, vi, 1852, p. 240).



to conceive these relations under the form of implications : "having fire" being equivalent to that which contains (vyāpaka), since there is fire without smoke (example, the sun), and "having smoke" might pass for the contained (vyāpya), since there is no smoke without fire. But this notion of the vyāpti does not appear till the syncretic epoch : instead of having given rise to the whole development of logic, as would have been the case had the Aristotelian theory inspired India, it is the result of an application of Buddhist idealism. The particular view points which gave rise to the Greek doctrine of extension and comprehension are not specified in Indian theories.

Is it necessary to add that they were equally conspicuous by their absence from Chinese reasoning? When the votaries of Mo set it out that "a young dog is a dog, but to kill a young dog is not to kill a dog" (XXXIII, 53) ; or "a brigand is a man, but to love a brigand is not to love a man, nor to kill a brigand to kill a man" (XXXVIII, 6), they were not making use of an embryonic syllogism, but were attempting correct designation and seeking the meet word. The five kinds of reasoning that they admitted (XXXVII, 2), viz. : consequence (hsiao) ; the illustrating of one thing by another (pi) ; placing in parallel (mu) ; analogy (yuen) ; and inference (tuei), concerned real data only, and had no bearing on concepts.

Thus the inference of the Oriental systems was in no respect on all fours with what we call induction and deduction. It testified neither to a passage from the general to the particular or *vice versa*, nor to the passage of fact into law or *vice versa*. The anumāna, as inference is called,

designates a knowledge "by connexion", which grasps the solidarity of two attributes of a single substance—in this it differs from simple perception (*pratyakṣa*)—but which nevertheless apprehends them both simultaneously, the one being perceived, so to speak, through the other. We are here dealing less with a reasoning based on judgment than with a complex representation. We must bear in mind the realist character of the *Naiyāyika* doctrine, as of the *Vaiṣeṣika*; nor must we forget that the Buddhists did not conceive of any mental operations other than syntheses, which were as much inherent in perception as in other forms of thought. Stcherbatsky has rightly called attention to the fact that the Aristotelian syllogism, expressed in Indian fashion, forthwith ceases to be reasoning and becomes a judgment by perception, as: "There is a mortal man, Socrates"; and Jacobi, with considerable appositeness, recalls in this connexion that such a mode of thought accords with the structure of Sanskrit, so given to express in a composite word what we should say in a sentence or even by means of an argument.

Nor is this all. We have just seen that the Indian inference keeps too close to external reality, to be the equivalent of an induction or a deduction; and that, in proportion as it reasons it feels the effects of the antique native argumentation which proceeded by condition and conditioned, but is not to be confounded with that substitution of identities forming part of one another of which a syllogism consists.

What the comparative method really brings out is the capital fact that all Asiatic logic, even when coloured with

idealism, is concerned with things, substances or phenomena, and not with concepts. Things may be conditioned ; they are neither superposed nor linked together like abstract entities. Things may be made to subserve our plans : the same stream of action may be propagated from one instrument to another in order to procure the desired end, but these means, brought into action by turns, are not reducible to equivalence. John Stuart Mill, who dreamed of an empirical logic and regretted that he could not find it in Aristotle, might have discovered in the East many indications of such a method and many mature examples. He would have learned there that the first condition is not to start from concepts, and that Socrates was the man responsible for the turn taken by logical thinking in the West. This teaching would have freed him from the postulates which he retained in common with rationalist logicians. Chinese nominalism would have testified to him that names do not necessarily suppose ideal essences such as the Ideas of Plato, but do require real essences, or a nature of things ; Indian nominalism would have revealed to him that an idealism without ideas is conceivable, since it exists right through the Buddhist tradition. As for ourselves, the East will teach us that our conceptual logic bears an exclusively European character ; that elsewhere a notion did exist of intelligible relations other than that decomposition of a whole into its elements—analysis—or than that composition of elements into a whole—synthesis ; and that theories of reasoning were built up which were not founded on theories of judgment, and theories of judgment not founded on theories of the

concept. In classification by manner and kind, allowing of definition, we have a Greek type of intelligibility which is in no way reproduced either by Indian classification, whether by analogical symmetry or by successive moments, or by that hierarchy of thoroughly social inspiration so dear to the Chinese mind. A logic of manner is not to be found except in the direct Socratic line of descent ; a logic of necessity, though in a different sense, is to be found both in the West and in India : with us, a part and parcel of the function of universality, reason , and in India depending on investigation of the structure of phenomena ; finally, a logic of order is peculiar to the Chinese mentality. It was quite unnecessary, therefore, that ideas, in the European sense of the word, should be admitted in order that contraries might be conceived : the opposition of true and false, of good and evil, of beautiful and hideous, do not implicate either kind or manner. Further, an evolutionism reconciling a certain equivalence in contraries with their difference is in evidence both with Li and Chuang, and with Asaṅga, just as with Hegel.

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### CHAPTER III

#### THIRD EXAMPLE: COMPARATIVE METAPHYSICS

A third opportunity of testing our method is provided by the problem "In what does Metaphysics consist?" Here we are confronted with spiritual facts of quite another complexity from the simple determination of the formal resources of reasoning. Whether we seek in metaphysics a theory of being or a doctrine of knowledge it is still concerned with the enigma of their nature, with the mystery of first causes and ultimate ends. Shamed by various positivisms, metaphysics appears to metaphysicians as the principle, possibly inexplicable, of all explanation. This mode of knowledge, being without compeer and outside all bounds, which aspires to a complete science independent of the observation of phenomena, and which, moreover, becomes kin to art by its spontaneity and its realizations, is indeed a Protæus which the critical mind would dearly like to apprehend. And may not the comparative method furnish us with the means to this end?

The original and purely accidental sense of the word metaphysics—"that which comes after physics"<sup>1</sup> predestined the expression to signify not merely "Physics Notebook, No. 2", as with Aristotle, but "Reflexions going beyond the order of things physical", a subsequent and derivative acceptation. And singularly enough this

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin de la Soc. franç. de Philosophie*, 10th year, No. 7, July, 1910: Philosophic Vocabulary, fasc. 13, article on Metaphysics.

paradoxical formation of a new word to designate a reality already old in the time of Aristotle—the “first philosophy”—finds its counterpart in the Buddhist vocabulary, for the compilers of the canon added to those books relating to the law and to the conditions of empirical existence—dharma—other books of the same sort as the first, but qualified this second category with the term *abhidharma*, or, in other words: “Dharma, continued.” Yet the expression very soon came to designate “speculations going beyond the order of dharma”. It would be highly imprudent to draw from this double coincidence inductions on the foundation of the subject, that is to say on the mind’s evident penchant for considering the physical order as established on a subjacent metaphysical order. On the contrary, in both instances the passing of the proper into the derivative sense is motivated by the prestige of that wisdom—*σοφία* or *vidhyā*—which discovers the roots of a phenomenon in something other than the phenomenon. On the one hand it is “the being as being”; in the other that which, deprived of form (*arūpa*), surpasses in dignity all forms (*rūpa*). The Chinese have no term to designate metaphysics, but the early Taoists never cease exalting the pre-eminence of the formless over the informed. The determination of a reality *sui generis*, the truth, but which is opposed to a physical datum, has from the beginning constituted the “metaphysics” of the East just as it has also constituted the metaphysics of the West.

For the Hellenes who came after Socrates this supra-phenomenal was that which defined a type of reality or even the essence (*οὐσία*). One attains to it when one



can express what this reality in question is. The horse I see is only the subject of knowledge because it supposes the horse which I think, which is defined by manner and by specific difference. The true nature of a being is the ideal synthesis of the "knowable" elements constituting it. We possess a faculty of the intelligible in reason (*νοῦς*), which is potentially all things; reason alone yields to us the truth which is the veritable real. Analogous estimates forced themselves upon the Chinese mind, which, though it knew not the Socratic ideal of definition, found a substitute for it in the notion of the precise meaning of names. Each being owes it to itself to realize the name it bears; otherwise its nature is deceptive, and the price of its ontological improbity is a lesser being. This ancient belief of the school of names (*ming kia*),<sup>1</sup> to which Confucius belonged, is the main source of the dogmatism of Chu-hi who declares in all reality the latitude it possesses to realize to a smaller or larger degree its essential nature (*sing*). Somewhat hazily Indian thought expresses a like notion when it says that every being has its *svadharma*, let us say, almost literally its *οἰκεῖον ἔργον*, which it does not realize when it is operated by another (*paratantra* in opposition to *svatantra*). In different though analogous fashion there is here the germ of an opposition between the being *de jure* and the being *de facto* which would appear to be inherent in all metaphysics.

This peculiar duality shows itself contaminated by judgment of values. It is right and proper, say the Greeks,

<sup>1</sup> As in *Yin Wen Tzū* in the translation of which mention has already been made.

that a thing should realize its true essence. It is pitiful, declares Confucius, to see sons who do not conduct themselves as sons, and unmarried girls who comport themselves as women. The greatest of all calamities is to confuse castes, proclaims Manu with emphasis, and all Brahmanism echoes him as with one voice. From the day that Plato laid it down that the sovereign good is supreme being, Western thought was pledged to hold, as St. Anselm and Descartes held, that being and perfection are synonymous. Everywhere the phenomenon appeared to suffer from a congenital blemish; the dogma of original sin, become inherent in the creature, merely expressed by a myth this necessity of existence. Matter, responsible for the fact that something other than the perfect exists, was itself evil. It is true that in India this deficiency wears a psychological aspect, that of ignorance which has to be banished by knowledge, or egoism which has to be replaced by disinterestedness. Yet in a general way these doctrines have their correspondences with Western thought, emphasized in that, if we leave out of account the realist systems, the sensible datum either has no existence at all or is but phantasmagoria and illusion.

Similar judgments of value affecting statements of a metaphysical order, throw off his track the analyst who is inclined to suppose that he has to deal here with functions of an exclusively speculative order. Theoretical science either knows or does not know; it never appraises; whether it prejudges or examines them objectively it neither approves nor condemns natural facts. If metaphysics appraises while at the same time it knows, is there not here some vestige of an antecedent pragmatism? A highly probable

pragmatism *a priori* because action is mixed up with knowledge in the religions, and because metaphysics makes its appearance in this religious atmosphere. A pragmatism, indeed, everywhere attested by the data of fact.

The philosophy of India did not issue from simple speculative needs. If these needs had been alone in manifesting themselves, Brahmanism would have consisted merely of a grammatical exegesis and a ritual of the Vedic texts ; it would have resolved itself into Pāṇini or Mīmāṃsā : Buddhism would have involved nought but edifying recitals and a vinaya regulating a disciplinary casuistry. However, the sophists of India, as elsewhere, had denied and made nonsense of morality as well as truth. In India more than anywhere else men swarmed who, without being any greater adherents of any particular religion than were the sophists, yet based all their hopes and fiercely concentrated their energy in a certain mode of life—asceticism—in the belief that such practices would secure to a man self-possession, peace, freedom, and mastery of the world. These advantages were assured to the faithful by strict observance of religion ; but they could be obtained, and in permanent fashion, without conformity to any cult, without belief in partly discredited dogmas, solely by a certain mode of life. We may put it, in metaphysical terminology, that the absolute was a datum of consciousness for whosoever was able to escape from the relative. In Indian speech, the phenomenon being nought but transmigration, it was what was called finding a ford (tīrtha) permitting the stream of saṃsāra to be crossed without being swept away by its waters ; thus one reached the far bank from which there is no return

and won deliverance or eternity. In this civilization metaphysics was born, not at the first wakening of speculative curiosity, but when men had convinced themselves that full freedom of self-governance, *kaivalyam*, consisted in being rid of the phenomenal. In this sense, it sprang from practice, since only the experience lived by the Yogis attested this final state, this sovereign good : the condition of the living-delivered-one (*jīvanmukta*). But from the moment the absolute is experienced the mind must strive to comprehend it, or at least, since to comprehend would be to do away with it, to comprehend the structure of the phenomenon in relation to it.

In this connexion let us recall the first philosophical reasoning of Indian intellectuality, which made Siddhārtha the Buddha, the Illuminated-One. We know that it consists in determining the process of salvation, that is to say of passing from the relative to the absolute and then of going through the same stages in inverse order, that is to say of recognizing how the absolute proves the relative. Consequently, all Indian metaphysics is shaped in this mould, providing a recipe for deliverance and substantiating its grounds by a general explanation of existence. Hence the absolute was only conceived of in measure as it was experienced on completion of a moral and religious effort ; but after that it was desired to have an explanation of the rest—the relative—relatively to this absolute.

Chinese thought, unlike Indian, has not fixed its attention on these two opposite yet symmetrical processes ; but at least it has clearly recognized that the absolute which accounts for being is that which we attain on completion

of a practical effort. In order to designate this effort India speaks of a road ; *mārga* ; of a journey accomplished by a vehicle, *yāna*. Confucius, like Lao Tzŭ, speaks of a way, *tao* ; and the use of this word appears to be all the more significant in that it immediately connoted, besides the way in which we must follow, the absolute itself in its mode of behaviour (the "way of Heaven"). Virtue or practical efficaciousness (*teh*) is indistinguishable from the way except for man who is capable of not following this way : it is one with the way even in the principle on which man is dependent. Where could we find a more striking testimony to the fact that the point of departure of metaphysical explanations is the arrival point of religious aspiration ?

Examined in the light of this information, Western thought abounds in analogous testimony. Plato, doubtless, would never have conceived of being as being if Orphic mysticism had not revealed to him the metaphysical value of falling back on oneself. The unconditioned, the *ἀνυποθέτου* which conditions all else, is to be obtained on completion of an ascending dialectic more than one of whose exigencies is as much moral as theoretical ; and this is corroborated by another descending dialectic which, from the Idea of Good and the order of essences, in so far as is possible, proves the nature of existence. The same principle appears as the sovereign judge of our action and as the origin of all being. This general schema imposed itself more or less on European thought and was reinforced by Neo-Platonism which had learned from the Stoics the fevered desire for an absolute modelled on the *αὐτάρχεια* of the ascetic. Christianity, the religion of salvation, accepted from

primitive Semitic sources the dogma of creation which bases the relative on the absolute. Under its influence, mingled with that of the Greek systems, the Cartesian doctrinaires placed in God, to whom henceforth belonged both will and understanding, the reason for existence and essences, natural order and the finality of grace. Thus a graduated scale links the rationalism of modern mathematicians and physicists, through the intermediate stage of a mediaeval theology itself imbued with Augustinian Platonism and the Alexandrianism of the pseudo-Denis, with that wisdom, equivocally compound of complete knowledge and pure action, which was the ideal of all antiquity. The Greek sage, criterion of perfection (*μέτρον τε καὶ κανὼν*) ;<sup>1</sup> the Chinese sage (kiun tzü) whose conduct harmonizes so perfectly with nature that it can be said that one is modelled upon the other ; the Brahman or the Bhikṣu who has grasped that the moral law (dharma), like all phenomena (dharma again) is relative, but who comprehends how it is founded whether in Brahma, in nirvāṇa or in Īçvara—these three human types are the pioneers of the metaphysical mentality whose proper function is thus to furnish an explanation of the world inverse and complementary to a fervent practical effort towards the sovereign good.

A negative confirmation of this result is to be seen in all three civilizations. The antidote to metaphysics, in each-

<sup>1</sup> Like the sophist before him who proclaimed "the measure of all things" Further, the *σοφιστής* rejoiced in a prestige almost on a par with that of the *σοφός*, it was representative not of the true *σοφία*, but of a competence, of a *savoir-faire* which foreshadowed it. When he wanted to say that the Spartans were masters of military art, Plutarch (*Pel.*, 23) declared that they *τεχνίται καὶ σοφισταὶ τῶν πολεμικῶν*

case, was the determination to explain the datum by the datum—the ambition of all forms of positivism, incompletely realized by Confucius, systematically pursued in primitive Buddhism, and, in a different sense, in the Vaiṣeṣikas, lucidly proclaimed by Hume, but forthwith compromised by the pseudo-founder of positivism. The anti-substantialism of Hume, in part a legacy from Berkeley, is only equalled by the anti-substantialism of the Buddhists which likewise only acknowledges phenomena linked together by causality, and which exorcises the phantom of the object as object and teaches a phenomenology including a psychology “without a psyche” (*anātmata*). And this positivism is ever accompanied by a repudiation of the supernatural, particularly by protestations against mysticism—let us not forget that the Buddha put his trust in the intellect rather than in mortification of the flesh, and that he gave his approbation to a “*via media*” between asceticism and the dissolute life.

If all explanation of facts by other facts appears contrary to metaphysics, a metaphysical explanation ought to consist in proving facts by something other than facts. Such, indeed, is the case. Metaphysics interprets the datum in terms of “principles”, which are of quite a different order. It is not only in Aristotle that the first philosophy is concerned with the *ἀρχαί* (*ἡ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν καὶ αἰτιῶν θεωρητικὴ*), which are in the same antithesis to facts as the intelligible to the sensible, eternity to time, the immutable to the future, the necessary to the contingent, or the unique to the

multiple. Nothing is more notorious, despite a new spirit, than the connexion between the simple nature of Descartes, the innate ideas of Leibnitz, the Spinozan essences, and the archetypal ideas of Platonism. However determined this critical philosophy may be to refrain from ontology and to set itself nought but problems of knowledge, it still conceives of intelligibility as but the unification of sensible diversity by forms, concepts or ideas. Since it had no Socrates the East never imagined archetypes; yet it did recognize principles—the *tattvāni* of the *Sāṃkhya*, the *padārthas* of the *Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika*, categories of being. The diffuse pantheism of the *Upaniṣads*, elaborated into a system by the Buddhism of the *Mahāyāna*, then re-assimilated by Brahmanism in Vedāntic orthodoxy, repeats in magnificent formulæ that a single principle, immutable, eternal, ineffable—constitutes all reality and all truth. The earliest Taoism does not insist on it with less energy: that which it tells us of the inexpressible *tao* coincides with the attributes of the god *Kṛṣṇa* according to the *Bhagavadgītā* or of the One of Plotinus. And China, in many of its schools—by the mouth of its legists, its political theories, its alchemists, its literati—confesses its faith in principles implanted in us by Heaven, the inner light of an infallible efficacy in the far-off days of the golden age or of a sojourn in the distant isles of the blest, and which will serve to lead us, also, with equal sureness, if we will but live our lives in accord with our “nature”.

Pluralists and unitarians are thus at one in the belief that philosophy's task consists in substituting principles for facts, whether the principles are to be discovered rooted



in the facts or are imposed upon them by the authority of sovereign reason. To perceive the antithesis between the sensible and intelligible—such is the constant theme of the more naive philosophies and the point of departure, at all events, of those which are more complex. Nevertheless, we must see in this merely one aspect of doctrine. However heterogeneous may be the principles of explanation in regard to the facts to be explained, the tacit opinion of metaphysicians supposes a certain homogeneousness between these two terms having contrary attributes. Without some community between them, how could it be thought that the one could be proved by the other? The homogeneity of principles and facts is likewise implied in empirical doctrine which claims to infer the principle from the fact, and in rationalist theory which readily flatters itself that it can deduce the fact from the principle. The empiricists have the task of proving that this or that fact possesses advantages which place it above comparison with other facts. The mechanist, whether he be a Kaṇāda or a Lucretius, sees in a ray of sunshine the dance of dust-atoms; in the movement of the fan he sees the automatic winnowing of grain of different sizes: to him this reveals the essence of all becoming—the movement of atoms and the origin of order—necessity. The mystic, whether he be an initiate of Eleusis or of the Serapeum, a Taoist wizard, Indian Yogi, Persian Sufi, Jewish Cabbalist, or Frankish pietist, experiences ecstatic religious states in which he is almost free from consciousness and which he considers to be of a quite different order from any other modality of being: in them he welcomes with transports of adoration

the manifestation of the divine ; by contrast with such a state all else is nought but vanity and unhappiness. Thus in the very midst of the phenomenal, a concrete intuition, an escape into a more real reality, offers itself. This bridge uniting two worlds is a privileged—a “crucial”—fact having the value of a principle. For the rationalist the communication is supposed from the outset. Considering himself to be the possessor of all essential truth embracing the entire universe, he is fully persuaded in advance that the real cannot belie its content of truth otherwise than by merely provisional appearances. For him order in all things and intellect in ourselves appear but as particular applications of impersonal Reason.

Principles can only play the part assigned to them by metaphysics if they are homogeneous with facts yet in dignity their superior. The Platonic idea of man can be reduced neither to a Callicles nor a Phaedo magnified and conceived of as eternal. These modes which we are, and substance, Spinoza was to say, are as little identical as the dog, a barking animal, and the constellation of that name. According to Malebranche, if our intelligence were a vision in God and our meritorious acts the divine grace operating in us, it would be blâsphemous and aberrant to deny the abyss separating our nothingness from perfection. Natural philosophers also profess the mutual irreducibleness of phenomena and being : the fire subjacent to physical evolution, according to the Stoic materialists, is an intelligent fire, quite distinct from the fire lighted by the shepherd on the hills or even by the priest at his altar. The atom so little resembles the speck of dust which

suggested it that it is without size. Thus for Greece and China, as for India, the factors of which the world is formed are "subtile" elements (*sūkṣma*), more truly water than that water in which we bathe, more truly air than the air we breathe, and hence exempt from the vicissitudes or changes of sensible qualities. The idea man is more really man than is either Callicles or Phaedo. In the idiom of the Cartesians, their existence and essences are for ever separate. Doubtless the constituent qualities of an essence are to be found in existence, but sophisticated, soiled by foreign contamination, whereas they are contained in their integrity in the essence to the exclusion of all else. Metaphysical principles have ever been endowed with a prestige which, in a sense, renders them incommensurable with phenomena; in them art has contemplated ideals, moral effort venerated examples of perfection; religious life has prostrated itself before their sanctity, and science nourished itself with their truth. The intelligibility which proves their jurisdiction and by which it is manifested is as much extra-logical as their substance is extra-phenomenal: it covers an explanation, not of the same by the same, or of the same by the other, but of the less by the more; and the pre-eminence of the term of superiority is not to be reduced to a greater quantitative volume but implies nature's prevalency. Given the superior and you have the inferior: such would be the formula of this singular logic. The axiom signifies that the nobler contains the reason of the less precious, the finished of that which is incomplete. The absolute is the correlative of the relative, and more than that, for were it not so it would not be the

absolute, since the relative supposes the absolute, but the absolute supposes nought but itself, in other words it rests on itself alone. The equivalents of the idea of "*causa sui*" are legion in Brahmanic literature from the *Upaniṣads* onwards, and in the *Yogācāras* (svatantra, svalakṣaṇa, svabhāva). The absolute embraces the universality of the relative, but as a whole which is not a simple total ; because it "eminently" contains, besides each being, the infinity of the possible ; no degree of multiplicity can exhaust the plenitude of its simplicity.

If the duality of fact and principle is reduced to the rivalry of two equals, it would consist in the opposition of two principles. Such is the Chinese antithesis of the yang and the yin, the one the male, luminous, and hot principle, the other the female, dark and cold principle ; such, too, is the Avestic and Manichean antithesis of Ormuzd and Ahriman, light by contrast with darkness. But there is a tendency for this pluralism to be surmounted to the advantage of one principle more absolute, if one may so express it, than the other. Without a shadow of doubt the pure and ardent effulgence of light surpasses in dignity the evil blackness of darkness : although yin and yang are supposed to be strictly inverse, alternative and complementary the one to the other, the yang glows with the superior prestige. *A fortiori* the Platonic idea is dominant over matter, despite the fetters with which matter weighs it down ; in the *Sāṃkhya*, mind (*puruṣa*) rules over a nature (*prakṛti*) with which it has no concern, and in the *Vedānta* the *Brahma*, alone existing, can only illusorily be antithetic to pure illusion (*māyā*). Thus from the moment that the

metaphysical mind admits two principles it supposes a first in regard to which the second immediately exhibits the weakness and deficiency of a "fact".

In general the relation of principle to fact embraces at one and the same time transcendence and immanence with regard to the fact. Complete transcendence appears only as an extreme case, to which the Aristotelian system approaches with its conception of the *νοῦς* which "touches" the world without itself being touched, and the Sāṃkhya with its *peruṣa*, the final cause of nature yet external to this nature. As much may be said for the integral immanence which was to coincide with the positive mind, for whom facts explain one another. The normal relation of principle to fact may be expressed by the formula  $P > F$ , of which a specialized research into comparative philosophy would supply illustrations without end, provided, for example, that one were to place in parallel the characters attributed to the absolute by Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Plotinus, and the Gnostics on one hand, and on the other, in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads*, the divers *darśanas* and the Mahāyāna, and throughout the Confucian and Taoist literature. Many an aphorism in the *Upaniṣads* and Lao Tzū is expressed with the precision of a mathematical axiom, such as the postulates of the *perennis philosophia*. Whence the enthusiasm and surprise felt by a Schopenhauer in the presence of these documents.

In every one of its applications the schema of intelligibility  $P > F$  supposes that  $P$  is more and other than  $F$ , since the absolute both transcends and gives rise to the relative. Intellectual, moral, and religious effort raises

F up towards P but does not induct us into P except in so far as serving to raise man above himself. Under how many different yet equivalent forms has universal wisdom laid it down that the sovereign good—here the City of God, there release from transmigration, elsewhere the Way of Heaven—has nothing in common with the good to be apprehended by the senses! A *θελα μοίρα*, the favour of grace, the paradoxical access to another order, whether of non-desire (nirvāṇa, extinction) or of that non-existence which constitutes supreme being, determines this “supernaturalism” at the price of which fact coincides with principle. Conversely, the way by which the principle, that is to say the perfect, proves the existence of the fact, so radically deficient, is beset with the many difficulties among which all metaphysics flounders. The West has invented two solutions—the presence of matter hostile to mind but equally necessary to the realization of no matter what, and the proud claim of the creature to liberty. The East saw in the relative either pure ignorance (avidyā), or the operation (līlā) of the first principle—the dance of Īśvara or the phantasmagoria and illusion (nirmāṇakāya) of the Buddha. Both solutions lead to similar results—the immanence of the rational (li) in existence according to the philosophers of the Sung dynasty; the theism of Rāmāṇuja who, exploiting the illusive formulas of the *Ītā*, delighted in showing the divine pulsating in man, even in the world; the romantic and later the Hegelian idea that the absolute as absolute was not sufficient unto itself but was realized through the relative—the ultimate finding of the whole series which led up, by a fairly

continuous progress of the idea of immanence, to the favour in which positivism has been held almost everywhere in our own times.

Comparative philosophy will get to know the metaphysical mind in no uncertain manner if it will set side by side the many artifices to which human thought, in different civilizations, has had resort in order to bridge the gap on opposite sides of which the absolute and the relative confront one another. The least bold, but perhaps also the least deceptive of these procedures, consists in placing an intermediary between the two. Alexandrian philosophy under the influence of the Jewish-Stoic *δυνάμεις* accepts in God three hypostases; this example was not lost on human thought; the Gnostics vied with them in the exploitation of this formula which so conveniently masked, by an almost insensible gradation, the difficulty of reconciling in one and the same universe a being superior to existence, an intelligible existence and a sensible existence. The Mahāyāna theory of the three bodies of the Buddha (*trikāya*),<sup>1</sup> that is to say of the three natures with which he was invested according as to whether he addressed himself to the Bodhisattvas, to the Pratyekabuddhas or the Śrāvakas, minds unequally advanced in the way of truth, likewise tends towards a transition between the true absolute and the simple relative. The avatāras of Viṣṇu, distinct incarnations of the same divine substance, play an analogous part in the theology of sectarian origin assimilated to Hinduism. These diverse hypostases result from the transformation into

<sup>1</sup> Masson-Oursel, "Les trois corps du Bouddha," *Journ. Asiatique*, May, 1913, pp. 581-618.

hierarchicalized essences of the successive phases which mark the passage from the relative to the absolute. The slow and painful victory which exalts man into God is in fact symbolized by most of the mystics as a journey of many episodes or a conquest of different territories (bhūmi), on which final beatitude is conditional. This spiritual geography—which usually permits of a “map of the Unknown” in which one part of the ‘way’ is set out—shows well enough to what extent the ontology of the Alexandrians or of Saint Theresa, of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* or of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* is simply the translation into static form of a lengthy experiment in profound introspection. The Yogi inspiration of the Yogācāras supplies a typical example of the mystical origins of idealism : Neo-Platonism and the thought both of Li and of Chuang may be interpreted in the light of this significant instance.

Another artifice not less characteristic and which confirms our suppositions as to the pragmatic origin of metaphysical systems, is to be met with in the explicit or virtual assertion that the latter end of all existence coincides with the first cause. The metaphysical mind as irresistibly discovers that causality and finality are complementary and inverse terms the one of the other as the positivist mind turns with repugnance from any confusion of their respective scope. This abstract theme can be sufficiently well schematized by the image of a piece of elastic stretched by force from its natural state, and which seeks ever to shrink again to its primitive condition of being. The elasticity of the essence which is slackened under the form of existence has its counterpart in the tendency of existence to regain its



essence. On the one hand, our true nature, our righteous nature ; on the other our accidental and defective nature—our factual nature. The dogmas of redemption, of compensating man's fall, of the last judgment, of expiation and pardon, re-establishing order out of chaos, all express in the great religious drama this dominating idea. The avenging archangels, or, at the opposite pole, a merciful and loving Saviour—Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God, and his Hindu parallels, Kṛṣṇa and the Buddha of the Mahāyāna, these are the redoubtable or beneficent powers who restore that former state, the falling away from which constitutes man's unhappiness. Our misfortune, said Leopardi, is that we are—a profoundly Buddhistic adage. Sin consists in disobedience to the Decalogue—above all in that we are children of the first sinner. Yet "*Felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem !*" To this Hosanna the final dictum of Buddhist speculation corresponds—existence is emptiness, but so also is the law : pity alone is never in vain since it helps us to full understanding, and the illusion of chaos fades. Obsessed by this same problem Taoist China exhausts itself with ascetic effort, with alchemist attempts to reintegrate us in the Tao, the source of universal life, while Confucianist China, by endless discussion of the original good or evil of nature, strains to discover the proper disciplinary, intellectual and moral means to restore in us the light and uprightness with which Heaven endowed us but which have become obscured and perverted. In the Far East as at the Academy or the Stoa, progress in Truth or advance towards the Good was the equivalent of rediscovering in ourselves our funda-

mental interdependence and our original harmony with the laws of the world: to this our reason appeared to be the infallible witness, just as, provided it was cultivated, it would furnish the means of re-establishing this harmony and solidarity in their native integrity when our evolution was complete. *Noûs*, Tao, *ātman*—the same principle ever composes our true nature as also the very foundation of being; the alpha and omega of philosophy resolves itself into the perception of this one and only truth, despite the unfavourable conditions of sensible existence, in such fashion that we may live the life that is worthy of being lived, the life which, instead of dividing us from our principle leads us back to it. “Know thyself” commands the initiator of Greek metaphysics, which ends with the precept of the return to the One. “Forget thyself” is the prescription of Indian speculation, which finds salvation and truth in this stripping off of one’s individuality, whether by access to the universal Not-being or to the primitive and ultimate being. “Realize thyself” is the Chinese adage, for such realization implies complete accord with the heavenly principle, free from vain enthusiasm, but also free from the sadness of resignation. All suffering attests nostalgia; happiness depends on return to the place to which we belong.

Comparative philosophy thus teaches us that metaphysics exhausts all its efforts on this single yet two-sided problem—the double paradox of the absolute realized in ourselves, and of the imperfect created by the perfect. Since our effort to know, our straining will, and our capacity to love, all lead us, no matter what the language we adopt, to the

*δμολώσις τῷ θεῷ*, it has to be admitted that, however hard the emprise, this participation in the absolute does not bespeak a vain ambition.

Reciprocally, however much the first principle may be bound up with and centred in its transcendent oneness—which would be degraded by any compromise with existence—of necessity, since there is a descent, it loses some of its sovereignty in constituting our infirmity. Heir to religion, metaphysics takes as absolute that which religion represents to be sacred in antithesis to the secondary and lower existence of the profane ; but the communication between these two extremes, which is assured by the practice of religion, everywhere gives rise to the same enigmas when it is transposed into terms either of ontology or knowledge.

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## CHAPTER IV

### FOURTH EXAMPLE : COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Comparative philosophy so far has presented itself to us in the light of a study yielding objective knowledge in a properly philosophical field, either extra-scientific, as in the case of logic, which is a technique of reasoning and not an observation of the manner in which men reason, or anti-scientific, as in the case of metaphysics, which is antithetic to science in the way that determination of the absolute is to the knowledge of the relative. We would now wish to discover whether comparative philosophy may not teach us something even in the domain of a true science—in the field of psychological phenomena.

Psychology, which has progressively disengaged itself from metaphysics, is now indeed constituted as an objective study of the facts of the mind. It has gone beyond mere observation in making experiments, and by means of statistics and measurements has introduced mathematical precision into the statement of certain of its results. By confrontation of cases of the pathological and the normal it has become skilled in dissociating functions which, in combination, make up the life of the mind, and, at all events in summary fashion, it determines what their action is in a state of health. We should never dream of denying that such researches justify great hopes.

Yet psychology appears to admit of mathematical



rigour only in so far as certain rudimentary phenomena of a physiological rather than a psychological order are in question, phenomena which having to do either with the measurement of sensation in terms of the amount of excitation, or with the expression of emotion, are reducible to the reactions produced by physical excitation. The precision of a statistical statement must not be allowed to masquerade as something more ; it formulates a mean, not a necessity. So it is with the results of pathological psychology ; and, let us add, a discipline which cannot but recognize that the normal is an exceptional condition has very little right to define the normal by the most frequent. The average yielded by a faculty is quite another thing from the truth, for a discovery of a spiritual order must seem like a pathological monstrosity to a psychology based on averages. Mechanist, evolutionist, and pragmatic explanations hazarded by turns to account for psychological facts cannot be justified except as heuristic hypotheses and are not entitled to pass for laws in the scientific sense of the term. Rightly or wrongly, the essentials of the life spiritual belong to metaphysical thought and from it, all unawares though it may be, arise those psychologies which claim to embrace the facts of consciousness in their entirety.

Little remains unsaid on the subject of the difficulty of achieving the objective in the realm of psychology. Psychiatrists, psycho-physicists, philosophers even, claim that they limit their zeal to the observation of conscious phenomena or to those which, having once been conscious, can become so again. Nevertheless many an investigator

who intends merely to state, actually argues. If we complain to him on this score, he will probably reply that he makes inductions or deductions with the single aim of exploiting the content of the observation, and, furthermore, that in matters scientific, facts are relations which can only be apprehended by the discursive mind. Conversely there are relations which are facts; in any case quantity and contrast enter into all quality, and, on the other hand, all relation, whether numerically expressible or not, implicates quality. Hence a psychological fact, even or above all if it appears to be an immediate datum of the conscious, yields itself to us only in escaping us; we cannot flatter ourselves that we know the instant that we have lived; and even if we have furtively grasped an exact mensuration, we should be very rash if we maintained that we know that which we have measured. How much the more indirect, then, is the apprehension of a fact when, as is most often the case, we conceive of it in terms of a theory. We are easily satisfied if all that we require is that the real should answer "yes" or "no" to our questioning, for it may happen that the real, like some stranger whose tongue we understand but little, gives us an answer that we interpret wrongly. A large number of our theories are valid for ourselves and not for reality; arbitrary even to us, they often remain external to phenomena which neither invalidate nor corroborate them. None the less do they have their uses, at all events their provisional uses; but we should only deceive ourselves were we to take them at their face value; in any case it will be

conceded that we are not always successful in perceiving the real at angles other than those imposed by our theories. Introspection, albeit ingenuous, is frequently deceptive. If it aims at interpreting data acquired by an objective method it introduces the arbitrary. So, too, if it intervenes in the testimony of another. Finally, by the very nature of our questioning, above all if it is prolonged, we run the risk of suggesting to the person interrogated the replies we would have him give. Hospital subjects are quick to learn from their doctor, and their depositions at once become about as instructive as the talk of a tame parrot to anyone trying to discover its natural cry. Thus there is nothing harder than to obtain intact a psychological datum; furtive and fleeting, it vanishes from him who would put it to the proof; it escapes clean through the net of those theories by which the observer thinks to secure it. Should he happen to capture some trace of it he limits it by isolating it and he places it in space and time according to his fancy; he appraises it in terms of judgment that is either subjective or merely expressive of averages. Pure experience represents a limit rather than a brute fact.

Hence, to determine some aspects, at least, of the psychological datum, we can never have too many resources at our disposal. To the introspective was added the objective method; then experiment and measurement had to be included in the methods of research, and, finally, pathological thought called attention to itself; even comparison between man and the animals, which has hitherto monopolized the name of "comparative psychology",

showed itself to be useful and fruitful. The most recent extensions of psychology were a research into evidence on mysticism throughout the whole of literature, and an inquiry into the mentality of those peoples furthest removed from our own civilization and which, on these fragile grounds, we dub savage or primitive. The harvest reaped in these divers fields henceforward brought within the domain of psychology has likewise provided grist for the mill, and to those pioneers who, after rude labours in clearing the ground, thus sowed that we might reap, we also owe a debt of gratitude. Yet, surprising as it may seem, practically nobody has been found to enable psychology to benefit by a knowledge of people who are neither abnormal nor of lower grade, but simply men like ourselves—whether related or not to our own race. And it is inconceivable that a study of the civilization of India and China should not yield to psychology as much information as has been gleaned by an examination of the aborigenes of Australia or the patients in our hospitals. We desire to show that in this regard the employment of the comparative method may lead to two results; on the one hand it may free us from the prejudices which are in danger of masking psychical reality, and on the other it may reveal to us facts that are little known, or apprehended under another form in the type of humanity to which we ourselves belong.

The most scrupulous of psychological research exhibits the effects of philosophical tradition from which our stock

of ideas are borrowed, even if only on account of the vocabulary we employ. But for want of initiation, even of an elementary order, into thought that differs from our own, we never doubt but that our mind, in the aggregate, represents the "human" mind. When events remind us of the existence of other types of humanity we hold cheap the testimony these types might provide us with, or else we consider that we are better served by our pursuit of objectivity. And yet thought shaped by persistent speculative effort during thousands of years ought not to be dismissed as having no significance. Doubtless it bears the imprint of the prenotions and traditions appropriate to it, and we run no risk of being unaware of such elements, because they leap to the eye at the first glance. Further, we may be quite sure that those very opinions which seem to us self-evident will be those which to people of another race are suspect, or at all events held to be relative to our European character. How, then, can we fail, by placing a number of distinct points of view side by side, to find at any rate a method of discovering those postulates of our own thought affected by relativity, and, in consequence, after having denounced them, an opportunity to be rid of them, or an occasion only to use them wittingly?

That we are more aware of the eccentricities of others than of ourselves is a truism. It needs no perspicacity to discover in Oriental civilizations ideas with which they have been obsessed and from which we ourselves have escaped scot free. We have never been ridden by the conviction, deep-rooted in the Chinese mentality, that

natural order rests on human conduct, especially on the action of the sovereign. Short of a great effort, we cannot comprehend the Indian belief that the soul must for ever pass on and that this dooms us to never-ending servitude in so far as we do not penetrate the mystery of the phenomenon; we are in danger of going fundamentally astray in regard to this question because the impossibility of dying right out of existence is not dreadful to us, but, on the contrary, is of the very essence of our hope. No one could maintain that prenotions of this sort have exercised no influence on psychology such as it is conceived by Chinese or Hindus.

Our traditional conception of mental activity has not imposed itself on the whole of mankind—far from it. A few examples taken almost at random bear witness to the fact.

The dualism of spirit and body—here is a metaphysical postulate naturally underlying our psychology of scientific intention; psycho-physics and psycho-physiology rest on the parallelistic hypothesis of Descartes and Spinoza. But history will reveal why, instead of considering life in its multiple unity, we have got into the habit of separating it into these two abstract and opposing divisions which appeared to account for its evolution—a spirit capable of animating and a body capable of being animated. Plato acknowledged the opposition of these two natures, and Aristotle their complementary character; the one represents the action of which the other is the motive force. On to this soul or principle of life, reason, the principle of universal order and total comprehension,

has been grafted more or less successfully. Thenceforward we never questioned that life and intellect spring from the same function ; so much so that when Descartes allowed the one and denied the other to the animals we were very much astonished. Yet the rent, to use a homely expression, is mended with white thread: that which, according to Aristotle, associates with us *θύραθεν*, or that which we possess, not in so far as we live, but in so far as, participating in the divine, unites ill with our nature. No matter ! Use and habit renders us blind to the disparity, and the recent pragmatic claim to attach the intelligence to the vital necessities has been adjudged rash. On the other hand, the presence of cosmic laws within us, under the form of reason, and identic, moreover, with the universal life, is in no way a stumbling block for Chinese thought, to which the Stoic doctrine can be compared on this head. While, as for India, she has never placed spirit and body in antithesis as two substances ; even when she has held them to be hostile the one to the other, as, for example, in Jainism, she has always considered that the soul possesses the body it has merited, which testifies to the closest solidarity between them. Further, rather than two substances, she acknowledges a hierarchy of functions of which some, doubtless, are corporeal and others spiritual, but without there being any antithesis between the two groups—a postulate which is no further removed from the facts, if envisaged without preconceived ideas, than our own parallelist prejudice.

The usual classification of psychological phenomena under the three rubrics of intelligence, sensibility, and

will, likewise bear the imprint of our Western culture. The opposition between understanding and sensibility presents a certain generality, despite the different meaning given to it, for the antithesis between being and the phenomenon is to be met with, as we have seen, in nearly all metaphysics. But will is a European invention. Socrates had no notion of it, since according to him it was enough to perceive wherein good lay to do it. Instead of concluding therefrom that the notion of will was arrived at later, in circumstances to be determined, we show ourselves inclined to tax Socrates' analysis with incompleteness. Confucius, however, considering that moral degradation results from intellectual disorder, is in agreement with this analysis, and Indian thought is equally ignorant of will. There is no room for this faculty between desire, the evil motive which generates illusion and egoism, and intelligence, the saving motive. Intellect, as India conceives it, is not to be resolved, as it is with us, into a passive contemplation of ideas to which is added an aptitude for combining them; the life spiritual is not polarized between these two extremes of inert elements and positive activity; hence the action of thought is one—*kalpana*—which, to take our own concepts into account, translates itself now as “reflexion” and now as “will”. Even superficial observers have taken note of this absence of the idea of will in marking, as they thought, a lack of energy in the Hindu temperament—a complete misunderstanding, since in no people has steadfastness of spirit, and not only steadfastness of soul, but passionate concentration of purpose, been so general; and yet a correct



intuition, too, since never in India is the effort of realization dissociated from intellectual effort

We put our finger here on a character peculiar to our psychology. Since Hume and Condillac it has striven to discover how the mind behaves in action. The solution varies according to the system—it is by a mechanical combination of images ; a finalist arrangement by organization round an idea or predominant feeling ; an intermittent operation of a power of synthesis ; the bringing into play of schemes, or a kind of principle of organization ; or by a current of thought which carries along with it that which feeds it but leaves to settle to the bottom that which hinders it. The difficulty always lies in linking together again a principle of active unity, starting from a multiplicity of inert elements. Hardly anybody questions that the basis of our mental life is to be found in the residue from former experiences, images and ideas.

Indian psychology sets out from an opposite postulate : its technical terms designate not states, but functions ; for Indian psychology a state is merely a moment arbitrarily isolated in the course of a continuous action ; it has no more real existence than a mathematical point. Hence mental activity does not present itself either as a mechanist combination or an organization by finality, since it is not superadded to the existence of previously given materials. Memory itself does not consist in the persistence of traces or impressions but in a particular case of mental activity. Hence nought is elementary save transient limitations ; nought fixed save law ; nought true but an action. How can we be surprised that our psychologists do not agree

about the manner in which they represent the mind when other men who reflect in a language affiliated to our own and who are in part our blood brethren, conceive of the human mind in a manner so utterly different ?

Our classic empiricism thinks to find in images resulting from sensible impressions the "bedrock" of mental life. Yet, when we seek to define precisely what we mean when we talk of an image, there is no doubt that we find ourselves in difficulties, for, on this point, no psychologist has yet succeeded in convincing his fellows that they have in mind the same reality. Whence the opportunity to repeat the argument already put forward—if we do not know what we understand when we imagine an image it is perhaps because we do not imagine one at all. In fact, India knows nothing of that mental process consisting in mingling *clichés* stored in the brain or the mind and thus contriving a mosaic or arabesque. Would such a process result in geometric ornament or in cubist or "dadaist" interpretation? If the kaleidoscope achieves in this way symmetrical figures it is because its internal structure implies a definite disposition. India, let us repeat, does not separate the image from the imagination, or rather acknowledges only a plastic operation in which the images are always fleeting moments. The creative and destructive "action" of *Çiva* is a dance, supple and continuous, not a consecutive series of filmed photographs which fix attitudes. The illusion is not in the movement but in the stationariness. From this we must conclude that introspection which would yield the same results on the banks of the Ganges as by the shores of the Seine is in nowise that which suggests

to us the belief in images. How much more simple it would be to acknowledge that this belief comes to us straight from Democritus and Epicurus ! The hypothesis of the atomists has become for us, by the tacit yet tenacious force of tradition, something beyond a dogma and more than a postulate—a quasi-category of our mind. Comparative psychology teaches us that these εἰδῶλα are but graven images.

Our classic rationalism considers that if not the whole mind, at least thought, acts on ideas. Aristotle contradicted himself in appearance only when he maintained by turns that we do not think without images, and that real thought is effected without images. Thought is a τόπος εἰδῶν, the place of ideas. No contemporary psychologist, as a fact, strictly adopts Aristotle's psychology. Nevertheless, in a vague and summary fashion most of them hold it to be approximately certain that we think ideas, however indeterminate such a term may have become since Plato, Locke, Kant and Hegel. Yet, here again, if it becomes a question of saying precisely what we think when we think an idea, introspection is unable to answer. We are a long way from having given up the Socratic idea of kind, although we have attempted to deepen extension in comprehension, and generality in necessity, as was already suggested by Plato and especially by Aristotle. Nevertheless the English empiricists echo Aristippus in making sure that they well apprehend a horse, but not horsiness. Maybe we should not have found here a stone of stumbling over which our systems come to grief had Berkeley, or rather if Stuart Mill—because it was less Utopian in his case—

had been acquainted with Indian thought. This thought, which is not "theoretical" like that of Plato, has never, save in exceptional cases where it has been penetrated, perhaps, by Hellenistic influences, doubled the sensible by an intelligible, both passively perceived. Not having in any way proceeded from Socrates, it has never suffered from this obsession by manner. For it the content of the mind consists in its very actions; and reason is only thought in its most complete autonomy—an autonomy so real that it can abstract itself from the empirical self, agent and victim of illusion, to reach beyond transmigration, passing outside life and death, being and non-being, to the supreme beatitude which implies sovereign freedom.

Examples of the kind can well be multiplied. They would always lead to this result, that our psychology is relative to our own tradition made up of Jewish-Christian beliefs and Greek doctrines. The more positive among us, without our having any suspicion of these postulates, ask of the questionnaires or the statistics bearing on our contemporaries, of the studies of psycho-physiology and the examination of patients, that they confirm the postulates inherited from Democritus, Socrates and Plotinus. A methodical research into psychology that is genuinely comparative would make this evident—we should learn from it to discern and then to eliminate those prejudices which have come down to us through our entire intellectual ancestry, yet which seem to us so natural that not even the most critical examination of the conscious would serve to reveal them to us.

This "cathartic" function of comparative psychology prepares, further, for the potential rendering of an even more positive service. We have seen that it provides a means of information and control by which to test the reality of psychologic facts. But there is yet more to be said—it would yield plentiful documentation as to data of which our mentality either knows nothing or fails to understand. We will limit ourselves to one or two indications.

It ought not to remain a matter of indifference to us that other minds have held certain functions equivalent which in our eyes are distinct. So-called evidence assures this distinction in the one case and this fundamental identity in the other ; we should be lacking in impartiality were we to be too firmly convinced of ourselves being right, that is to say, of always being able to interpret better than other people the pure datum. Here is a case in point : India designates by one and the same name heredity, memory, the general idea, and the directing principles of knowledge and action. Maybe she thus confounds notions which we have the merit of distinguishing ; but it is also possible that we, by setting up differences unknown to India, are passing by real affinities without remarking them. None but an absolute mind would be qualified to approve in the one case and condemn in the other ; a critical mind should gather up all the pros and cons and compare them ; far from removing ourselves from the real we should thus equip ourselves to attain to it, for it is only to be apprehended by thought. As a fact, the multiple acceptations connoted by the word *samskāra*, whose translation is therefore the despair of Indialogues,

have this in common that they are all concerned with that which the present state of the conscious owes to its past. Already Greek and Latin call manner of being a "possession" *εἶς*, *habitus*. Sanskrit has it that we are what we make ourselves. "Esse sequitur operari". Instead of thinking, as we think, that being what we are we can either act or not act, that is to say, instead of postulating will, liberty being added to intelligence, Indian thought sees in empirical being a simple climax of action, a resultant that is ever provisory and changing so long as constraint in the opposite sense to that normal for life has not there put a final and definitive term to it. The determination of our present by our past, in fact, is that which we owe to the forms of being which preceded our birth, to our earlier acquired knowledge, habits and memories; all this is summed up in our concepts and principles. The Hindus, though they have discerned psychic reality from this highly particular angle, do not, as we do, dissociate the theory of knowledge from psychology, as is shown by the theory of the *pramāṇas* analysed above (on p. 129).

In truth, their views are psychologically valuable in measure as they have unintentionally produced a psychology. To know facts solely for the sake of knowing them, out of pure curiosity, is an obsession that haunts Europeans only; it is this obsession which causes us to suppose a manner of being for phenomena in themselves as phenomena—what we call objectivity. India reveals herself as less theoretic, less positive, less realist; is she to that extent further from reality? Hardly, if reality is life. Hence India does not think of seeking out the laws of memory—the word which designates

memory connotes tradition, *smṛti*, rather than a psychical function—or of imagination, or judgment; not that she has taken no note of these diverse functions, but because she only hopes to attain them in action, holding that they play their part in our existence as a whole and not as isolated functions envisaged in themselves. Maybe, indeed, a spontaneous effort of thought, apprehended just as it is effected in its immediate native form, presents at least as great an evidential value as the examination of a function which has first been abstracted and then perverted by the desire to make it work in vacuo. The Hindu genius has not built up a theory of sensibility, a theory of emotion, or a theory of the association of ideas or images; nevertheless, far from having despised such researches it has given itself with the closest application to a penetrating and refined investigation carried out from two different points of view, elaborating an æsthetics on the one hand, and on the other defining the conditions of religious salvation.

This æsthetics is at once sensualistic and abstract. It knows no other satisfaction than that of the senses which, moreover, constitute that “common sense” which is the empirical mind (*manas*). As we do, it calls appreciation of beauty—taste, *rasa*—from the name of one of the senses. Feelings are but agreeable or painful sensations which we desire or fear; hence love is reduced to voluptuousness and is in no way separate from the train of sensible attractions which produce or heighten enjoyment. Despite these purely sensistic principles, Indian æsthetics has its being entirely in the plane of the imagination: taste transcends the visible form (*parokṣa*), and the world of the

senses (alaukika) ; it operates in those who cultivate a special aptitude for it and who realize not what the artist has expressed but what he has suggested. The art of Asia is founded on suggestion to a very much greater extent than that of Europe. This is patently evident in the lyrical style of Chinese poetry in which the thoroughly concrete language inspires sentiments which it does not itself translate. To a lesser degree suggestion or transferred meaning (dhvani) is of the very essence of Sanskrit poetry (kāvyā). This emotion, mature at its birth, a sensuous joy that is yet entirely due to the witchery of art, making use of our naturally acquired representations (vāsanā) spontaneously exercised, the true action (līlā) of the spirit, is what engrosses the attention of India and has supplied the subject for endless speculation. The spiritual state concerned is the disposition (bhāva) produced in us by certain factors (vibhāva) and productive of certain effects which, in our eyes, would be considered as the expression of the emotions (anubhāva) : all this is, because the artist has brought it into being by himself feeling it (bhāvanā). Is this to confound together imagination and feeling ? Perhaps so, when it is a case of translating, in a language inadequate to express them, given facts which do not fit in with our own data, but which are of equal human value.

For different reasons Indian philosophy gives as little importance as does Indian æsthetics to a science of normal psychology. The belief in transmigration, well nigh universal and accepted without question from the fifth century before Christ, has caused all speculation to be obsessed by the ever-present problem of discovering a way of escape



from this bondage. The solutions differ but they all consist in undoing the warp and woof of phenomena, woven of illusion. A psychical datum, which is an integral portion of the phenomenon, is part of this illusion. A psychology of the empirical ātman, that is to say of the human soul according to nature, is thus embarked on only if occasion arise, as being altogether unworthy the attention of philosophic investigation. What is really of importance is, by an effort literally against nature, to conquer the egoistic assertion of personality with a view of winning peace in enfranchisement by severe and determined self-restraint. He would be very rash, or rather naively dogmatic in the European sense of the word, who should claim that Brahmanic, Buddhistic or Jain thought had alienated itself from pure psychical data by comporting itself thus. At all events this thought has passed through highly original states of the conscious which have nothing individually arbitrary about them, since the experience of a whole race agrees in holding them valid for humanity, or at least as being positive in the most definite degree for Indian consciousness. These facts of what we may call *metapsychology*, because they are outside the order of ordinary sense, are yet psychic facts, since they have had for their theatre the consciousness of innumerable persons. They furnish ample contribution<sup>1</sup> to a theory of mystical experience whose evidential authenticity will no longer be contestable when we refrain alike from seeking

<sup>1</sup> Masson-Oursel, "La physiologie mystique de l'Inde," *Rev. de l'Hist. des Rel.*, 1922, or *Jl. de Psych.*, 15th April, 1922. "Le positivisme mystique de l'Inde," *Logos*, v, 3-4, July-December, 1922, pp. 268-75 (Naples).

in the East for light, so-called, on the occult pseudo-sciences, and from taking our own judgment not only as the criterion of truth but of actual existence.

Our notions of psychology may thus not only be enriched and rendered more precise but reinvigorated by a comparison of our mentality with that of other races. Accustomed as we have been for nearly a century to conceive of psychology as susceptible of scientific method, we have presumed that the psychic datum we hold admissible possesses all the objectivity of a physical or biological fact. Further information will dissipate such an illusion. It is true that, apart from differences of environment, the same natural laws can be applied the world over ; physics, like arithmetic, is the same in the East as in Europe. But although our knowledge of this fact gives us a legitimate right to be proud of belonging to that fraction of mankind responsible for natural science, it does not in any way justify our claim to the achievement of a similar objectivity in all that pertains to knowledge of man himself. In this matter each human type has something to say, whether or no we are ready to allow an equal value to all the testimony. We have no assurance whatever that the law of Fechner applies to all mankind ; it is a matter worth verifying. No doubt certain sensations will be felt by a savage with greater sureness and with finer shades of discrimination, than by a civilized man. According to environment, emotional expression varies infinitely in terms of physiological as well as social factors. To what a degree would relativity be increased were we to envisage real spirituality ! Is there one law of memory, one hypothetical explanation of dreams,

valid without modification for many different kinds of minds? Do not let us be in too great a hurry to reply "yes" or "no"; it belongs to comparative psychology alone to come to a decision. Henceforward it teaches us that our so-called psychic experience does not agree on every point with that of other races; it leads us thus to be critical of this experience which very often reduces itself to prenotions implanted in us and consecrated by tradition. Each one of us knows that even physical facts appear to us only through the medium of our minds. So much the more ought we to regard with caution the guise in which this mind appears to itself, whether by introspection that is always suspect, or in terms of theories some of which at least are so currently held that they seem to present all the incontrovertibility of a datum. In this domain that agreement between testimony which witnesses to the truth is infinitely less come-at-able than in the natural sciences; for here doctrine is not easily distinguished from the truth it supposes—it is even by the light of the doctrine that we catch a glimpse of the reality. We have little chance of attaining to this real until, having systematically compared the various doctrines, the solid, essential residuum of pure experience emerges in measure as these doctrines cancel one another out.

Then, perhaps, facts of which we have scarcely any suspicion may stand out clearly. We are not here thinking only of many phenomena which remain enigmatic and that we are too ready to call illusory—such as powers claimed

to be supernatural, levitation, telepathy, or action of thought at a distance. As there is no such thing as pure chimera, it is likely that none of the great obsessions of mankind are quite without foundation: metaphysics, in particular, whose perpetual ambitions, like its perpetual artifices, which, as we have seen, comparative philosophy is able to lay bare, doubtless exists on the strength of "Naturanlage"—to use the Kantian expression—only in so far as it leans on some fact, susceptible, it is true, of false interpretations, yet authentic within certain limits. Experience of the absolute, denounced as the vainest of all pretensions by the positivists, may perhaps appear to a positivism more worthy the name as a fact which—as with all others—we have condemned, yet which, in some respects, has been genuine. Such a cloud of witness, emanating from minds to be counted among the most powerful and having the most ingenuous of consciences, collected in all sorts of environments, and in all ages, can hardly have borne completely false testimony. The winning of inner peace by asceticism is a fact; because, to recall but one aspect of the question, such an one, to whom life itself is a death, does not fear death. The concentration of self by that form of respiratory gymnastics practised by Yogis, Fakirs, and Taoists is another fact. The spell of mono-ideaism achieved either by the arrest of thought (the *cittavṛttinirodha* of the Yogis), by a quasi-hypnotic suggestion (Tantrism) or on completion of an intellectual effort of abstraction (*ἀπλωσης* of the Alexandrians, or the Mahāyānist emptiness), is still another fact. To suppose that we thus go out of ourselves

to reach some transcendent absolute, that we effect a *ἐκστασις*, a passing over to the further shore—*nirvāṇa*, or the City of God—maybe is an interpretation. But to feel that, after having experienced this incomparable state which does in fact lift the individual out of himself, one is transfigured, free of all personal concern, thereby no longer divided from others and hence in selfless communion with the universe, this is a fact. To persuade oneself that one is then at one with the multiple unity out of which we may conceive that all things flow because abstraction leads all things back to it—is this hypothesis, or is it fact? It is *metaphysical fact*, the loftiest synthesis of spirituality postulated not as the final term of a rational dialectic, but experienced and in consequence accessible to psychological analysis. A comparison of doctrines may thus lead up to an enrichment of concrete observation and help to circumscribe an element of experience. The reflective doctrines are not sufficiently abstract to transport us beyond the datum but each of them presents it in its own way. They themselves testify to us of reality. Spontaneous, even if their framework is built up with patient application, they make manifest the native structure of our consciousness. The real is not less present in those theories, wrongly supposed to be entirely factitious, than in those so-called brute facts, whose equal arbitrariness is not recognized. There is little to choose between the partiality of the metaphysician and the partiality of common sense; doubtless one is no less artificial than the other; but once they have been exploited by comparative philosophy both will reveal themselves as charged with a positive content.

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